



MacGregor Point

Visitor Centre
Final Environmental Study Report



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Cover photo:

Existing Visitor Centre from Old Shore Road Trail

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MacGregor Point Provincial Park
Visitor Centre
Final Environmental Study Report

Approval Statement

I am pleased to approve the *MacGregor Point Visitor Centre Environmental Study Report*.

MacGregor Point Provincial Park is a natural environment class park located along the eastern shore of Lake Huron within the County of Bruce, five kilometres south of Port Elgin and 130 kilometres northwest of London.

The report translates the *MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan's* broad policy concerning the development of a Visitor Centre into specific actions, with the benefit of more detailed analysis. This report was prepared in accordance with Ontario Parks' Policy PM 11.03.01 relating to implementation plans and the *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*.

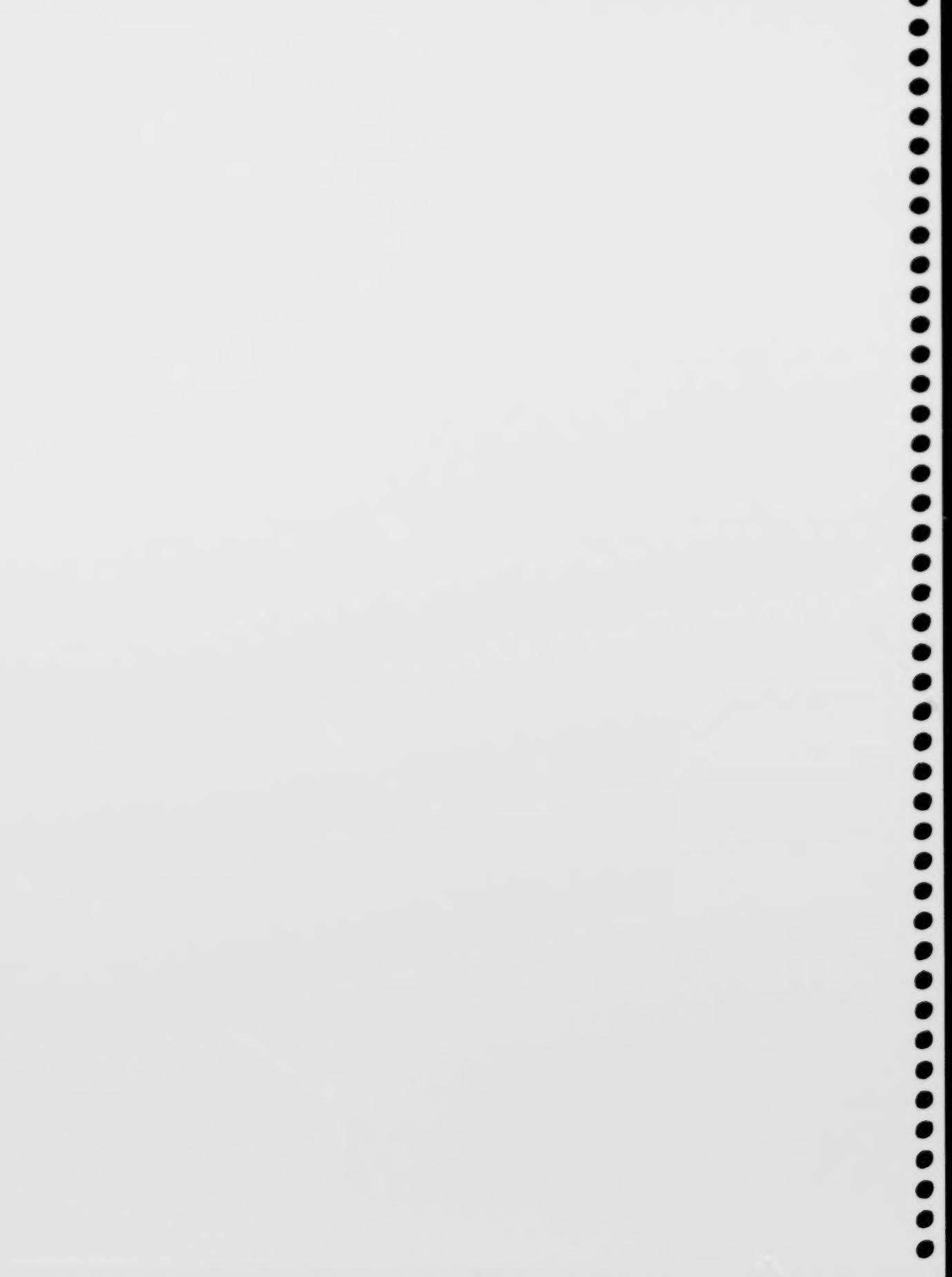
This Environmental Study Report had both a *planning* component and an associated *consultation* component. I extend my sincere thanks to all those who participated in the development of this document.

Yours Truly,



Peter Sturdy, Zone Manager
Southwest Zone, Ontario Parks

Date Aug 29, 2008



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The existing Visitor Centre at MacGregor Point Provincial Park was completed in 1977 as a three-season facility. At the time it opened to the public, MacGregor Point operated 136 campsites from May through to October. Today, the Park provides 360 campsites, two group camping areas, seven multi-purpose trails and year-round camping opportunities.

The proposal is to expand and upgrade or replace the Visitor Centre which is now 30 years old. The proposed facility will feature interpretive exhibits and displays, offer educational events related to the natural and cultural resources of the Park and will provide tourism benefits to the Park and surrounding communities within the Southern Bruce-Grey Tourism Area. The intention is to design a facility that will accommodate the needs of this all season Park, the needs of the Friends of MacGregor Point and their sales outlet, offer an expanded staff workspace and make available year round indoor public washroom facilities. The total footprint for this facility will extend over approximately 0.5 hectares.

Three alternative locations were identified for this project: the existing site referred to as Ash Pond; a site adjacent to the existing site referred to as Turtle Pond and a third site adjacent to the campers' beach parking lot referred to as the Woodland Site. These alternative locations are all located within the Development Zone of the Park. The candidate areas were each considered in light of the natural features present and by taking into consideration the possible environmental effects associated with each of these areas.

Alternative Location 1 (Ash Pond) was selected as the preferred site for development. Here the majority of the footprint of the building is presently disturbed and services are readily available. This site also allows for the expansion of the existing facility away from the sensitive open shoreline complex. The result is that potential adverse effects on the natural environment can be mitigated during construction as well as during operation of the Visitor Centre and delivery of the Natural Heritage Education program.

1 PROJECT PROPOSAL

1.1 Visitor Centre Proposal

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Parks, is proposing to expand and upgrade, or replace the Visitor Centre in MacGregor Point Provincial Park. The proposed Visitor Centre will feature interpretive exhibits and displays, offer educational events related to the natural and cultural resources of the Park, and will provide tourism benefits to the Park and surrounding communities within the Southern Bruce-Grey Tourism Area.

The size and scope of the proposed Visitor Centre redevelopment can be characterized as:

- An energy efficient building or building complex with a floor area in the 500 to 600 square metre range with the required services to operate year round;
- An interactive Visitor Centre for the Park with professionally-produced exhibits on the Park's natural and cultural history, recreational opportunities, etc.;
- A retail store including storage and work space for the Friends of MacGregor Point (the Friends);
- Parking for approximately 50 vehicles, including sufficient space for recreational vehicles;
- Barrier free access and washroom facilities;
- An archival and storage facility for both historical and prehistoric artifacts as well as cultural resource reports;
- The total "footprint" for this facility is anticipated to extend over approximately 0.5 hectares.

The following topics are examined in this Report:

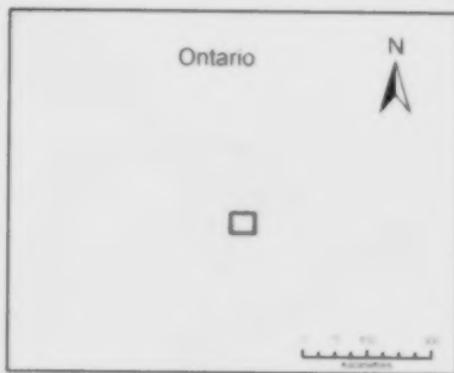
- Project objectives;
- Upgrading of the existing building as well as alternative locations for developing a new Visitor Centre or Visitor Centre complex;
- Characteristics of the project area and building site;
- Environmental effects associated with the proposed undertaking;
- Project implementation and mitigation measures;
- Monitoring of the project implementation; and
- Public and agency input and concerns.

Figure 1 - Regional Setting



Regional Setting

MacGregor Point



MacGregor Point
Provincial Park

Provincial Parks

Roads

Water



Copyright May 2005
Glosser's Point Provincial Park
Produced by Ontario Parks, Development Zone

This map is for illustrative purposes only.
It is not only used as being a precise indicator of
Roads, Informs of features not as a guide to
Navigation.



1.2 Location and History

MacGregor Point Provincial Park (Natural Environment Class) is a 1,370 hectare protected area located along the eastern shore of Lake Huron. The Park is located just off Hwy. 21 approximately five kilometres southwest of Port Elgin in the middle of the popular Kincardine/Port Elgin/Southampton tourist area (Figure 1-1).

First Nation peoples first traveled the waters of Lake Huron to hunt, fish and trade with neighbouring bands. Archaeological evidence suggests that the materials found near the Nipissing Bluff were from food gathering or processing camps used for short periods of time during the Early Archaic era (around 2,000 B.C.). Early land surveys described this area as swamp-like and its isolated location away from transportation routes delayed European settlement and development in this area. The Old Shore Road provided the only land route between Southampton and Kincardine until the railroad line came in the 1870s to help develop the economy and establish the tourist potential of the area.

The Park was established in 1975 by Order-in-Council to provide year-round recreational opportunities and protect the natural values associated with this section of the Lake Huron coastline. Part of this demand for camping was created by the closing of the nearby Inverhuron Provincial Park in 1975, as a result of its close proximity to the Bruce Nuclear Power Complex at Douglas Point. After an extensive public and agency review process, the Master Plan for MacGregor Point was completed in 1978. This plan underwent a public review in 1986 and still guides the development and operation of the Park. The Visitor Centre, which was identified and built as a result of this planning process, is now being considered for redevelopment to meet existing and future operational needs.

1.3 Project Approach

Environmental Assessment

This work is being carried out in accordance with the approved *MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan*. The proposal has been screened and assigned as a category C project, in anticipation of a heightened public interest and a need for additional planning, research and evaluation. Copies of the project screening table and record of screening process are included in Appendices A and B, respectively. The project proceeded through the planning and consultation process described in *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (Class EA), including preparation of this Environmental Study Report (ESR).

The process was initiated in accordance with the Class EA, which came into effect on January 10, 2005. The planning process followed Ontario Parks' Policy PM 11.03.01."Preparation of Implementation Plans for Provincial Parks". As a category C project, it has proceeded through the planning and consultation process described in Section 5.2 of the Class EA, including preparation of the ESR (Refer to Appendix G).

Environmental Study Report Procedure

The process prescribed for the development of Implementation Plans (MNR Bulletin No. PM 11.03.01) requires the development of an *Environmental Study Report* (ESR), addressing:

- Project Proposal

- Project Alternatives
- Study Area
- Environmental Analysis
- Evaluation and Selection
- Implementation Details
- Project Monitoring
- Public and Agency Consultation

The implementation, that is, the development of the mitigation measures, the design and engineering, and the construction activities, will follow the *MNR Construction and Mitigation Handbook*.

Project Alternatives

The existing Visitor Centre was built in 1977. It was constructed near Lake Huron between the Algonquin and Nipissing Campgrounds, where it would be accessible to both campers and day-users. It was designed as a three season facility with exhibit space/indoor theatre, staff workspace and limited storage facilities.

Since that time, the program has expanded. The formation of the Friends of MacGregor Point co-operating association, the development of a retail sales outlet and expanded programming, staffing and visitation to all seasons of the year has created a demand for improved interpretive, meeting, staff workspace, archival and public washroom facilities that the existing Visitor Centre cannot support.

Three alternative locations were identified for this project:

- the existing site referred to as Ash Pond (where both an upgrading of the existing facility and the construction of a new facility will be considered);
- a site adjacent to the existing site referred to as Turtle Pond, that would utilize some of the existing support infrastructure; and
- a third site adjacent to the campers' beach Parking lot referred to as the Woodland Site.

The evaluation of alternatives was conducted on several levels (Table 2.1).

1. The impacts on the natural resources in these areas were evaluated by reviewing *A Reconnaissance Survey and Evaluation of Life Science Resources of MacGregor Point Provincial Park, 1999*. This reconnaissance survey was revisited in 2004. A *Life Science Evaluation of Three Alternative Locations for Visitor Centre Expansion / Reconstruction at MacGregor Point Provincial Park* was written by Jarmo Jalava (Appendix H) to confirm the values identified. With the help of a comprehensive checklist, the environmental effects of each alternative were assessed and the preferred development scenario identified.

2. *An Interpretive Plan for the Visitor Centre - MacGregor Point Provincial Park, 2004* identified the objectives and themes for the Visitor Centre and was assessed with each alternative scenario location.

3. Two new candidate areas as well as facility redevelopment or replacement on the existing site were identified, reviewed and evaluated. The selection of the preferred development area

was based on readily available data and a discussion of key issues and concerns associated with each of the three alternatives.

4. In addition, other factors that have been considered while evaluating project alternatives include social, economic, accessibility and safety.

2 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

2.1 The Park Management Planning Process

The *MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan* was approved in 1978 and reviewed in 1986. During this process, proposals were presented relating to achieving Ontario Parks' objectives for natural heritage education and tourism. Through the initial planning process, which involved public consultation at several stages, a decision was made to construct the existing Visitor Centre in 1977.

The park management planning process also established the park goal, park objectives, and operations and implementation policies. These provide general directions for the development and support of the Visitor Centre. In 1986 the classification of MacGregor Point Provincial Park was changed to Natural Environment.

The option of expanding and upgrading the existing Visitor Centre will not require a Park Master Plan amendment.

2.1.1 Park Goal and Objectives

The goal of MacGregor Point Provincial Park is:

To provide a variety of quality, low intensity, year-round recreational experiences within a natural environment. The facilities created will be compatible with the physical, ecological and cultural attributes of the park and will complement the more intensive recreational opportunities already existing within the immediate market area.

MacGregor Point Provincial Park will contribute to the achievement of all four of the objectives of the Provincial Parks System: Protection, Recreation, Heritage Appreciation and Tourism (MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan, 1978; amended 1986).

2.1.2 Operations and Development

On the basis of the Park's goal and objectives, the Park Master Plan developed a comprehensive set of operations policies including policies for visitor services, now called Natural Heritage Education (NHE): "To provide a visitor services program based on a strong central theme relating to the Huron Fringe physiographic region and ecological features within the park".

The purpose of the Visitor Centre would be to provide a focal point for the park visitor. Information, displays and staff would explain the park theme and stories. Visitors would gain an appreciation of the importance of MacGregor Point as a coastal corridor on the Huron Fringe. The recreational opportunities in the park would be promoted with an emphasis on "a variety of

seasonally distinctive recreational activities" (MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan, 1978; amended 1986).

2.2 Implementation Level

2.2.1 Alternative Locations (Candidate Areas)

As stated in the 1978 Park Master Plan, a Visitor Centre was established in the Park in its existing location near Ash Pond. The plan identified a general location near Lake Huron between the Algonquin and Nipissing Campgrounds, where it would be accessible to both campers and day-users. Two additional locations were also selected and include Turtle Pond located just east of the existing Visitor Centre, and Woodland Site located southeast of the campers' beach parking adjacent to the Nipissing Campground. All three locations satisfy the criteria established in the existing management plan for the location of a Visitor Centre (Figure 2-1).

This section briefly introduces the alternative areas and discusses concerns and potential effects associated with the development of a Visitor Centre in each one of the three locations.

Location 1 - Ash Pond Site (Existing Location)

The Ash Pond area¹, found within the park's Development Zone, contains both recreation and park management infrastructure. Situated between two major campground areas, it contains the existing small Visitor Centre, the campfire circle, the Huron Fringe Trail, the Old Shore Road Trail and access to the campers' beach area.

The Ash Pond site is located in the most intensely used section of the park adjacent to two major campgrounds and the campers' beach access. The natural environment at Ash Pond Bay includes approximately one kilometre of rocky beach, an open shoreline vegetation complex, a fen-pond complex and an extensive backshore woodland complex. The site location for the proposed Visitor Centre redevelopment utilizes the existing location with expansion extending further back into the woodland complex to avoid further extension into the open shoreline vegetation complex.

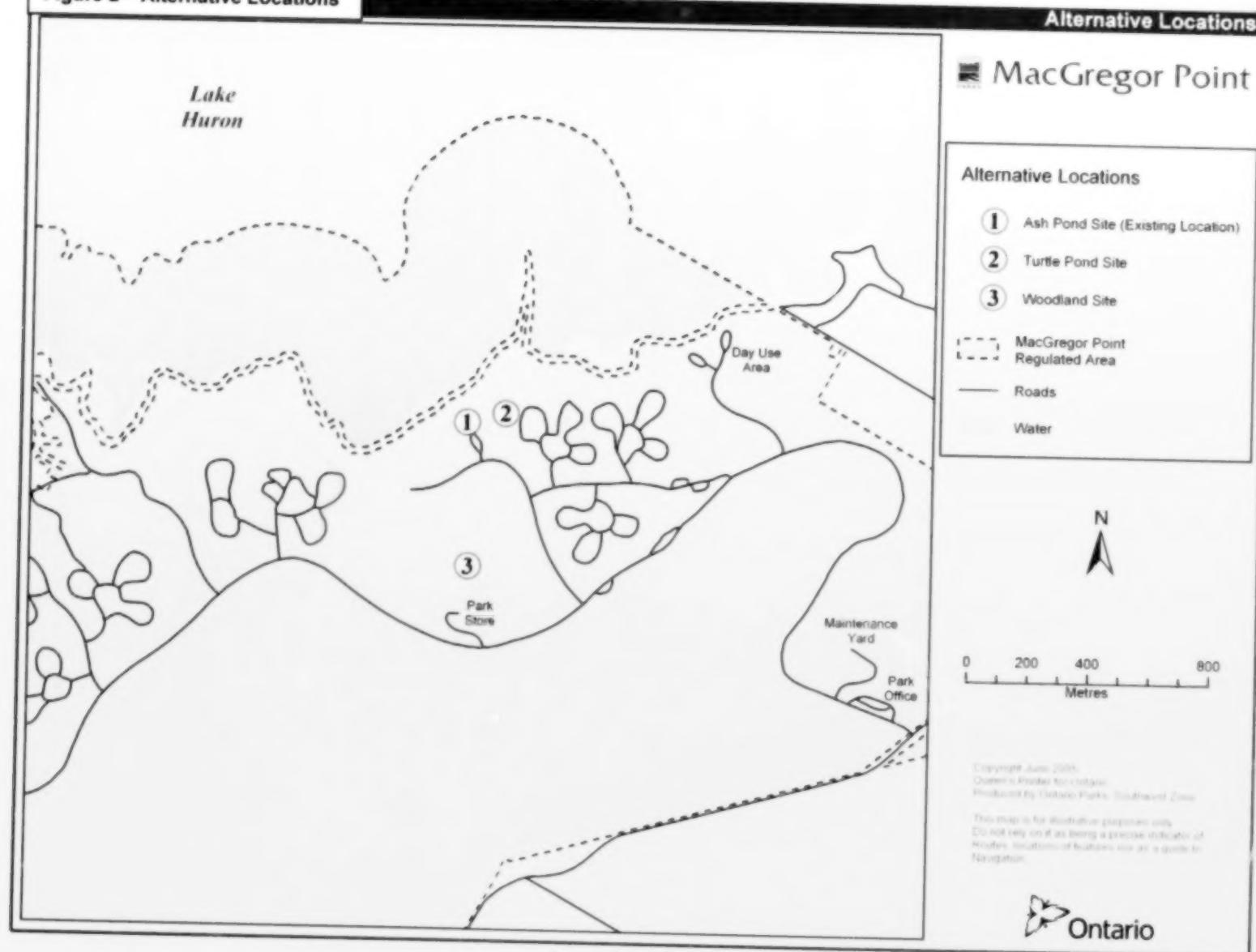
Key factors considered in the identification of Ash Pond as a potential location for a new Visitor Centre or Visitor Centre complex in MacGregor Point Provincial Park were:

- The existing footprint from the existing Visitor Centre will be incorporated into the final design;
- Located between the Algonquin and Nipissing Campgrounds adjacent to existing trail and road network;
- Convenient proximity and access for majority of park visitors;
- Public safety due to reduced vehicle use from campground visitors traveling to the Visitor Centre due to the proximity to the campground and trail network;
- A phased development approach would be possible at this site.

¹ Identified as Location 1 in Jalava 2004 (Appendix H).

- Minimizing impact on the natural environment by using previously developed areas. Re-development would incorporate the site of the existing Visitor Centre;
- Minimizing impact on the natural environment of the shoreline by ensuring development of the Visitor Centre occurs away from the open shoreline vegetation complex, extending the required footprint into the woodland complex;
- Enhanced camper customer service during fall, winter and spring seasons in the Algonquin Campground;
- Potential for use of existing infrastructure (roads, water, power, sewer, parking); and
- Potential for cost savings related to facility re-development and operation.

Figure 2 – Alternative Locations





Location 2 – Turtle Pond Site

The Turtle Pond site², found within the Development Zone of the park, is located just east of the existing Visitor Centre and contains substantial recreation and park management infrastructure. Nearby are the existing small Visitor Centre, the campfire circle, the Huron Fringe Trail, the Old Shore Road Trail and access to the campers' beach area.

The Turtle Pond site is located in the most intensely used section of the park adjacent to two major campgrounds and the nearby campers' beach access. The natural environment at the Turtle Pond site includes approximately one kilometre of rocky beach, an open shoreline vegetation complex, a fen-pond complex and an extensive backshore woodland complex. This site would use many of the existing infrastructure services from the existing Visitor Centre. Development would occur 100 metres inland from the existing Visitor Centre within the woodland complex to avoid any extension into the open shoreline complex and provide easier access to Turtle Pond.

Key factors considered in the identification of Turtle Pond as a potential location for a Visitor Centre in MacGregor Point Provincial Park were:

- Located between the Algonquin and Nipissing Campgrounds adjacent to existing trail and road network;
- Convenient proximity and access for majority of park visitors;
- Public safety due to reduced vehicle use from campground visitors traveling to the Visitor Centre due to the proximity to the campground and trail network;
- Minimizing impact on the natural environment of the shoreline by moving the Visitor Centre further away from the open shoreline vegetation complex into the woodland complex;
- Enhanced camper customer service during fall, winter and spring seasons in the Algonquin Campground;
- Potential for use of existing infrastructure (roads, water, power, sewer, parking); and
- Potential for cost savings related to facility development and operation.

Location 3 – Woodland Site

The Woodland Site³ is located within the Development Zone just south of the existing Visitor Centre and contains substantial recreation and park management infrastructure. Found nearby are two campgrounds with a gatehouse and park store. Within close proximity are the existing small Visitor Centre, the campfire circle, the Huron Fringe Trail, the Old Shore Road Trail and access to the campers' beach area.

² Identified as Location 1 in Jalava 2004 (Appendix H).

³ Identified as Locations 2 and 3 in Jalava 2004 (Appendix H).

The Woodland Site is located adjacent to the most intensely used section of the park adjacent to a major campground, the park store and the campers' beach access. The natural environment at Woodland Site is a woodland complex. Although this site does not have all of the infrastructure found at the other two sites, it does locate the Visitor Centre away from the sensitive shoreline vegetation complex.

Several factors were considered in identifying this zone as a potential site for a Visitor Centre in MacGregor Point Provincial Park:

- Located between the Algonquin and Nipissing Campgrounds, adjacent to existing road network and campers' beach area;
- Convenient proximity and access for majority of park visitors;
- Public safety due to reduced vehicle use from campground visitors traveling to the Visitor Centre due to the proximity to the campgrounds and trail network;
- Enhanced camper customer service during the shoulder seasons in the Algonquin Campground; and
- Potential for use of existing infrastructure (road and parking).

2.2.2 Final Project Location (Preferred Development Area)

In order to identify the area preferred for redevelopment of a Visitor Centre, the three candidate areas were evaluated considering the general criteria contained by the MNR Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans (MNR Bulletin PM 11.03.01):

• Potential environmental effects;	• Feasibility; and
• Public input;	• Cost.
• Effectiveness;	

The results are presented in Table 2-1. Overall, the Ash Pond candidate area is considered the preferred location for development of a Visitor Centre. The key rationale for this decision can be summarized as follows:

Potential Environmental Effects

With all three candidate areas there is concern for direct environmental impact from the development of a Visitor Centre and associated recreational uses. At both the Ash Pond and Turtle Pond areas, basic site infrastructure is already in place. Therefore, construction and operation of the necessary site infrastructure are anticipated to cause less impact. The Ash Pond site has already experienced disturbance and the plan to expand the footprint of the Visitor Centre away from the open shoreline complex further reduces the effects of building expansion in the sensitive shoreline area.

Public Input

An *Invitation to Participate* was posted within the Park during the summer of 2004. No comments were received expressing concerns or preferences for a particular location of the Visitor Centre.

Effectiveness

All locations offer a variety of natural features typical for MacGregor Point Provincial Park. The existing locations near Ash Pond and Turtle Pond are the most effective for the delivery of the interpretive and educational programs for the Park.

Feasibility

Site conditions are for the most part equally favourable for redevelopment or the development of a Visitor Centre at Ash Pond or at Turtle Pond. In light of the existing site services (i.e., power, water, sewage, and parking) at the existing Visitor Centre, this location is preferred over the Woodland Site. For the development of a new centre, the Ash Pond site is the preferred site. It would limit the area of disturbance to one that already exists and allows expansion of the existing facility away from the sensitive open shoreline complex. It would also allow for a phased Visitor Centre complex approach.

Estimated Cost (@ \$357. per foot)

- A cost of new building at existing Ash Pond site - \$1,800,000 to \$2,060,000
- B cost of new building Turtle Pond - \$1,800,000 to \$2,060,000
- C cost of new building Woodland site - \$2,300,000 to \$2,520,000
- D cost of upgrading and expansion of the existing site - \$1,400,000 to \$1,720,000

The estimates above were based on 2006 building costs. The final cost will depend on the design of the building, if the existing building will be retained or if a whole new facility will be built.

Table 2-1: Evaluation of Candidate Sites

Environmental Effects	Ash Pond (Existing Visitor Centre)	Turtle Pond	Woodland
Terrestrial Resources	Located in the open shoreline complex on a small dune ridge with low dune vegetation and significant plant species, adjacent to the Old Shore Road Trail and Huron Fringe Trail – intense use has been limited to the trails and facilities. Expansion would impinge on a mature coniferous woodland complex.	Located adjacent to the shoreline complex in a mature woodland complex that is dominated by coniferous trees with significant plant species that borders a fen-pond complex on the eastern edge.	Located in a woodland complex that is mainly a deciduous, middle aged forest with a moderately open canopy and significant plant species. This site would be a new site and would create the greatest impact of the three areas considered.
The Open Shoreline	This is the site of the existing Visitor Centre and its redevelopment in the open shoreline complex and adjacent woodland complex would result in minimal disturbance in the significant shore dune complex.	This site would utilize the infrastructure from the existing Visitor Centre but requires a new footprint for the building, in an area removed from the open shoreline complex.	This site would be a new site and would require a new footprint for the building. It is removed from the shoreline complex and will have no affect on the open shoreline complex.
Aquatic Resources	Fen-pond complex on the southwestern edge, Lake Huron on the northern edge of the site. Life Science Report recommends no development into this fen.	Fen-pond complex on the eastern edge.	Seasonally wet areas throughout the site.
Land Use	Site is included in designated Development Zone. Current land uses include adjacent campgrounds, Old Shore Road Trail and Huron Fringe trail, campers' beach, Visitor Centre, campfire circle, gate house and park store.	Site is included in designated Development Zone. Current land uses include adjacent campgrounds, Old Shore Road Trail and Huron Fringe trail, campers' beach, Visitor Centre, campfire circle, gate house and park store.	Site is included in designated Development Zone. Current land uses include adjacent campgrounds, Deer Run Trail and Huron Fringe trail, campers' beach, Visitor Centre, campfire circle, gate house and park store.
Cultural	Archaeology resource potential for this area is minimal.	Archaeology resource potential for this area is minimal.	Archaeology resource potential for this area is minimal.
Safety	Due to the proximity to two campgrounds and trail system, travel distance for the majority of visitors is minimized.	Due to the proximity to two campgrounds and trail system, travel distance for the majority of visitors is minimized.	Due to the proximity to two campgrounds and trail system, travel distance for the majority of visitors is minimized. Existing trails would link up with this site.
Economic impact	The site provides potential for cost effective delivery of Natural Heritage Education program due to its closeness to major campgrounds.	The site provides potential for cost effective delivery of Natural Heritage Education program due to its closeness to major campgrounds.	The site provides potential for cost effective delivery of Natural Heritage Education program due to its closeness to major campgrounds.
Waste disposal	Waste management infrastructure and services already in place but not yet in operation.	Waste management infrastructure and services already in place nearby but not yet in operation.	Waste management infrastructure and services are available. They would have to be extended to include this site.
Noise pollution	Not an issue.	Campsites in Ash Loop of Algonquin Campground are located across Turtle Pond and are visible from this location. Noise from the campground or alternatively from the Visitor Centre could be an issue.	Not an issue.

Environmental Effects	Ash Pond (Existing Visitor Centre)	Turtle Pond	Woodland
Scenic quality	This site provides a scenic view of Lake Huron and the shoreline complex. Potential for visual integration of a Visitor Centre facility with surrounding landscape. Existing forest cover sufficient to screen views into site and parking area.	This site provides a scenic view of turtle pond. Potential for visual integration of a Visitor Centre facility with surrounding landscape and trails. Existing forest cover may be sufficient to screen views into site and parking area. Campsites in Ash Campground are located across Turtle Pond and are visible from this location.	This is the least scenic of the three locations and the site provides a view of the woodland complex. Potential for visual integration of a Visitor Centre facility with surrounding landscape and trails. Existing forest cover sufficient to screen views into site and parking
Effectiveness for Natural Heritage Education Program and Resources	Site area located at the inland edge of the open shoreline complex with some extension into the woodland complex and with a view of Lake Huron. A wide variety of characteristic park features and scenery including natural qualities can be experienced directly at the site and on the trails from the site. The present campfire circle is located within easy access of this site. The existing NHE program plan reflects programming from this location.	Site area located adjacent to Turtle Pond. A wide variety of characteristic park features and scenery including natural qualities can be experienced directly at the site and on the trails from the site. The present campfire circle is located within easy access of this site. The existing NHE program plan reflects programming from the nearby present location of the Visitor Centre.	Site located in the woodland complex where the typical forest communities can be experienced. Low scenic qualities exist in this area. The location of the campfire circle would need to be determined.
Accessibility	Visitor Centre located on trails within walking distance to campsites. Location allows for frequent and spontaneous visits by campers. Road access is via the campers' beach road.	Visitor Centre located on trails within walking distance to campsites. Location allows for frequent and spontaneous visits by campers. Road access is via the campers' beach road.	Visitor Centre located on trails within walking distance to campsites. Location allows for frequent and spontaneous visits by campers. Road access is via the campers' beach road.
Public Input	Comments received expressed a preference for existing location of the Visitor Centre.	Comments received expressed a preference for existing location of the Visitor Centre.	Comments received expressed a preference for existing location of the Visitor Centre.
Feasibility	Site already accessible from the main park road and the Old Shore Road Trail. Site location allows for visitor access to Lake Huron. Redevelopment of this site would limit use of the site during construction. NHE Plan reflects programming from this location.	Site already accessible from the main park road and the Old Shore Road Trail. Site location allows for visitor access to Lake Huron. Development of this site would allow use of the existing centre during construction.	Site would be accessible from the main park road and the Deer Run Trail. Development of this site would allow use of the existing centre during construction.
Development cost	All utilities (water supply, telephone, power, sewage) available on site. Potential for significant cost savings through utilization of existing site services. The existing parking lot would be utilized at this site.	All utilities (water supply, telephone, power, sewage, parking) available within site area. Potential for significant cost savings through utilization of existing site services. The existing parking lot would be utilized at this site.	All utilities (water supply, telephone, power, sewage) are not currently available at this site and would need to be extended to the area adding to the cost of development at this site. The existing campers' beach parking lot would be utilized at this site. A determination would need to be made regarding the location of the campfire circle.
Operational Cost	The operation costs of all three sites would be similar.	The operation costs of all three sites would be similar.	The operation costs of all three sites would be similar.

3 PROJECT STUDY AREA (THE PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT AREA)

As a result of the discussions presented in Section 2, the Ash Pond area was identified as the preferred location for developing a new Visitor Centre. A delineation of the study area is presented in Figure 2 - 1. Due to the relatively small size of the Park, information for the preferred site as well as the entire park will be included in this section.

3.1 Management Zones

Land uses within MacGregor Point are identified and classified within the 1978 Park Master Plan, amended in 1986, according to environmental and historical landscape qualities and perceived requirements for protection. Three zoning categories can be distinguished within the Park:

- Development Zone;
- Access Zone; and
- Natural Environment Zone.

Zone boundaries are presented in Figure 3-2. The Park Master Plan defines the individual zones as follows.

Development Zone covers half of the park area and includes the recreational core of the Park, which will provide facilities for a wide range of day-use and camping activities. Developments permitted within this zone include trails, roads, campgrounds, washrooms, visitor and entry control structures and a visitor centre.

Access Zone provides the minimum facilities required to support access to and/or through an area having attributes consistent with a natural environment zone designation.

Natural Environment Zones include landscapes in recognition of ecological and cultural value in which there is a minimum of development required to support low-intensity recreational uses.

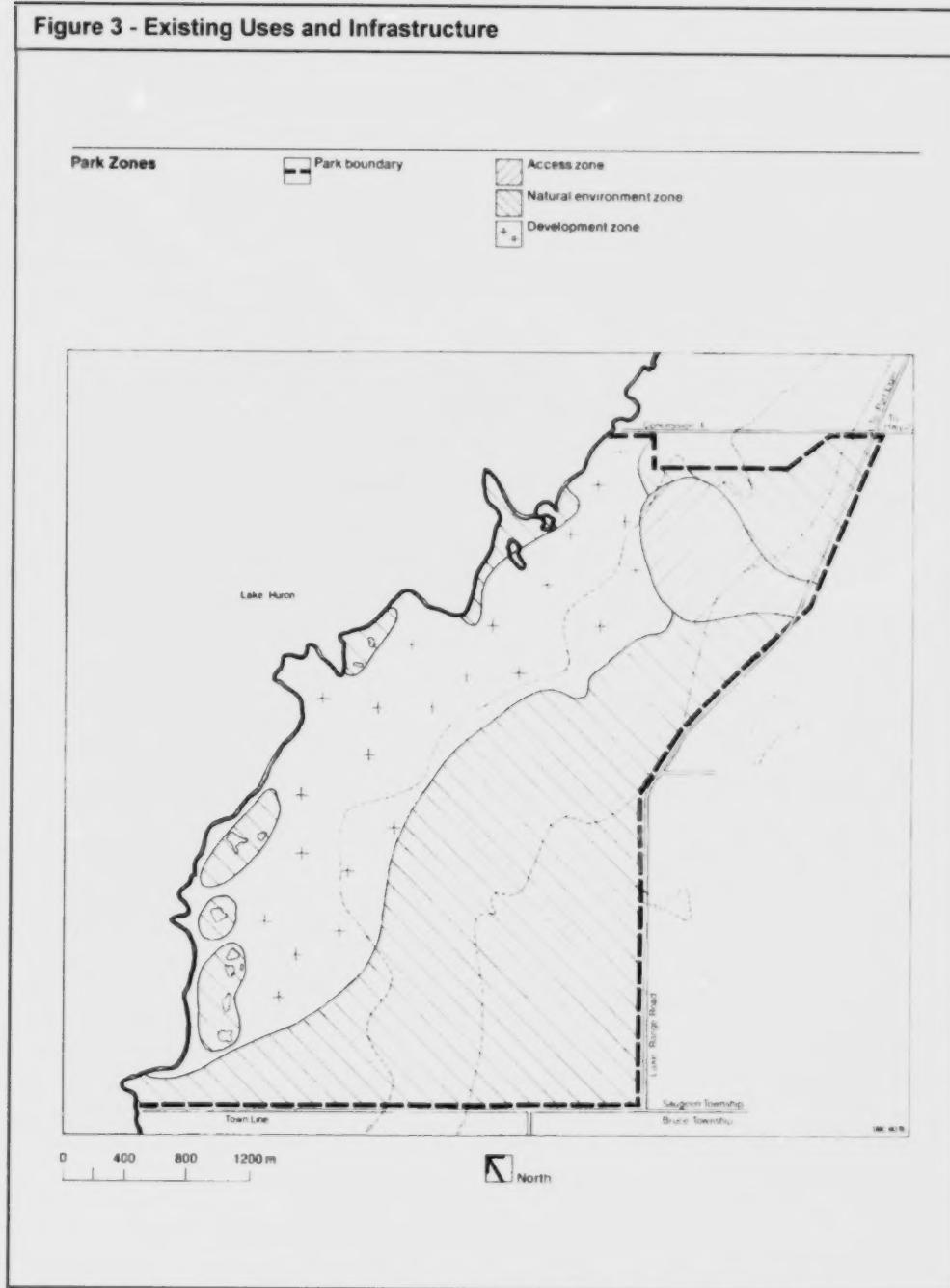
The Ash Pond preferred development site is located in the development zone.

3.2 Infrastructure and Existing Uses

The existing infrastructure and current uses within MacGregor Point Provincial Park are presented in Figure 3-2. Key features are briefly discussed in the following sections.

3.2.1 Park Office/Maintenance Compound – Access Zone

Approximately 20 staff members currently operate out of the Park Office/Maintenance Compound on a seasonal and year round basis. The work conducted includes general administration, operational and maintenance tasks, as well as natural heritage education, and visitor information. The infrastructure encompasses:

Figure 3 - Existing Uses and Infrastructure

From the MacGregor Point Provincial Park Management Plan.

- Office building;
- Fenced yard with three-bay maintenance garage
- Three-bay storage garage;
- Septic field;
- Storage building; and
- Fuel gas pump station.

3.2.2 Campground and Day-use Area – Development Zone

Associated with the development zone is the following key infrastructure:

- Three campgrounds with 360 campsites (138 with, and 210 without, electrical services, and 12 yurt sites) and 49 sites open year round;
- Two group camping areas;
- Gatehouse;
- Park store and wood yard;
- Six comfort stations (including showers, flush toilets, laundry facilities);
- Four large septic fields;
- Trailer dumping and filling station with a septic field;
- Centralized garbage bins in each campground drop (self contained steel containers);
- Campfire circle (approximately 100 seats);
- Day-use free access beach and campers' beach;
- Parking (approximately 30 spaces within campers' beach, 69 spaces within the free day-use area);
- Over 30 kilometres of trail including the Old Shore Road Trail, Huron Fringe Trail, Deer Run Trail and Kempf's Trail; and
- Visitor Centre with parking for 30 vehicles within the Visitor Centre parking lot.

All campgrounds and their facilities are in operation between mid May and the middle of October with Birch Boulevard Campground and the Visitor Centre parking lot remaining open on a year round basis.

3.2.3 Visitor Centre Complex

Approximately eight Ontario Parks and Friends of MacGregor Point staff work out of the existing facility from May to the end of August. During this time, the Visitor Centre serves as the hub of the natural heritage education program. It provides interpretive and educational programs to both the public and to organized groups such as school groups. It houses an indoor theatre, interpretive displays, a resource library and local area tourism information. The Huron Fringe Shop, operated by the Friends of MacGregor Point is also located in the Visitor Centre. The Visitor Centre is the reporting location for all park volunteers including the Campground Host program and the Friends of MacGregor Point Park.

The present Visitor Centre does not meet the needs and expectations of today's park users. There are currently no public washrooms in the Visitor Centre, the displays are tired in appearance, and the size and layout of the Visitor Centre prevent more than one activity from occurring at one time.

As part of the Natural Heritage Education Program, the Park has partnered with the Friends to present several larger interpretive events. The Huron Fringe Birding Festival has grown in

capacity and in 2005 offered 82 different events over a 10 day period. Wild for the Arts and a spring and fall Nature Study Series have been designed to expand interpretive program use by reaching varied audiences.

Associated with the Visitor Centre is the following infrastructure:

- Visitor Centre;
- Campfire circle;
- Playing field;
- Parking lot;
- Huron Fringe Trail (boardwalk);
- Vault toilets;
- Old Shore Road Trail;
- Picnicking spot;
- Boardwalks;
- Viewing platforms; and
- Outdoor interpretive displays.

The Visitor Centre is not a year round facility but is used intermittently between October and May for interpretive programs and activities. Interpretive programs and activities occur primarily from May through October. The Visitor Centre parking lot is maintained year round.

The Ash Pond preferred development site is located in the development zone and expands upon the footprint of the existing Visitor Centre. It would allow for a phased complex to be developed.

3.3 Terrestrial Resources

MacGregor Point Provincial Park encompasses 1370 hectares of mainly forested land adjacent to and along an eight kilometre section of Lake Huron shoreline. A low bluff representing the former shoreline of pre-glacial Lake Nipissing runs along the eastern boundary of the Park. This location on the eastern shore of Lake Huron produces a cooler-than-normal microclimate.

Most of the topography of MacGregor Point is fairly flat and approximately half of the Park could be described as lowland or wetland. The underlying calcareous bedrock belongs to the Bois Blanc formation of Middle Devonian age. Although it does not appear to outcrop anywhere except at times of low water, the Bois Blanc formation is close enough to the surface to give rise to the calcareous nature of the Park's fens, ponds and parts of the shoreline.

While historically largely undeveloped for agriculture, the Park has been logged as recently as 50 years ago. Over 14 kilometres of roads and numerous park buildings have been erected since the mid-70s. As well, there are several additional kilometers of hiking, biking and skiing trails. A dam constructed in 1987 by Ducks Unlimited has created an extensive wetland along the southern boundary of the Park.

MacGregor Point is significant for its diversity. Nearly 50 percent of all the known plants of Grey and Bruce Counties are found here while over two-thirds of the recorded bird species of the two counties have been counted in the Park. There are significant opportunities for nature study and appreciation in MacGregor Point.

In a 1999 report, *MacGregor Point; A Reconnaissance and Evaluation of Life Science Resources*, the following natural communities were identified.

3.3.1 The Open Shoreline Complex

MacGregor Point's eight kilometres of Lake Huron shoreline occupy approximately 20 hectares (two percent) of the Park. The shoreline is made up of stones, boulders, sand, cobble, gravel, low sand dunes and mucky marl deposits. More than one type of material often appears at the same site, sometimes intermixed. Some sandy beaches and three areas of low sand dunes were found.

The shoreline contains the most biologically significant area of the Park. Although it only occupies a fraction of MacGregor Point, at least 39 of the Park's 51 rare native plants are found along the shore in the north part of this area. The entire open shoreline itself may account for only 2 percent of the Park but it contains 10 of 14 known provincially rare plants (Johnson, 1999). They are as follows:

<i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i> var. <i>magna</i>	Sand Reed Grass
<i>Ammophila brevigulata</i>	Marram Grass
<i>Elymus lanceolatus</i> spp. <i>psammophilus</i>	Great Lakes Wheat Grass
<i>Scleria verticillata</i>	Low Nut Rush
<i>Eleocharis rostellata</i>	Beaked Spikerush
<i>Iris lacustris</i>	Dwarf Lake Iris
<i>Salix myricoides</i> var. <i>myricoides</i>	Blue-leaved Willow
<i>Linum medium</i> var. <i>medium</i>	Stiff Yellow Flax
<i>Lithospermum carolinense</i>	Hairy Puccoon
<i>Pseudocallihergon turgescens</i>	a moss

Regionally significant species found within this habitat type include (Johnson, 1999):

<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed
<i>Panicum flexile</i>	Wiry Witch Grass
<i>Carex sterilis</i>	Fen Sedge
<i>Carex garberi</i>	Garber's Sedge
<i>Cyperus bipartitus</i>	Umbrella Sedge
<i>Salix cordata</i>	Sand Dune Willow
<i>Arabis drummondii</i>	Drummond's Rock Cress
<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	Low Serviceberry
<i>Lathyrus japonicus</i>	Beach Pea
<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>	Cocklebur
<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	Sneezeweed

A major feature of the Lake Huron shoreline is the Old Shore Road, a pioneer road that provided land transportation between Goderich and Southampton. Today it serves as a hiking/biking trail winding along the shoreline through this stretch of parkland.

A much higher percent of the total visitor impact occurs in the most biologically significant general area than its percentage of the total park area, particularly in the significant shoreline zone. In general, shoreline vegetation is relatively resilient when trampled, but there is a limit; e.g., very excessive trampling will erode sand away from the plants growing on and binding it.

The existing Visitor Centre is located on the inland edge of this zone adjacent to a fen-pond complex.

3.3.2 The Fen-pond Complex

One of the truly significant habitats, the fen-pond complex occupies just over one percent of MacGregor Point but contains 13 rare plants, seven of which are found nowhere else in the Park. There are at least 17 separate areas identified in this complex with 16 of them being found immediately adjacent to the Lake Huron shoreline. Many of them consist of a fen (low lying tract of land) while a few can be more properly defined as calcareous marshes. Several areas are strictly ponds but at least three involve both fens and ponds. The pond directly inland from Sunset Point is the largest and deepest.

The soil is muck, which tends to be marly. One very marly fen contains an abundance of non-calcareous stones and small boulders. The moisture regime varies from wet to open water. The most easterly fen was probably generated by calcareous seepage at the base of the Nipissing Bluff.

The overall dominant plants are Hoary Fruited Sedge, Stonewort and Beaked Spikerush. Other significant plants include twig rushes, Sweet Gale, Shrubby Cinquefoil, White Cedar and Pitcher Plants. Johnson identified 4 provincially rare species in this community.

Scleria verticillata

Eleocharis rostellata

Cacalia plantaginea

Pseudocalliergon turgescens

Low Nut Rush

Beaked Spikerush

Tuberous Indian Plantain

a moss

Nine native species rare in southern Bruce County were also found and include:

Selaginella selaginoides

Vallisneria americana

Phragmites australis

Carex sterilis

Scirpus cespitosus

Drosera linearis

Drosera anglica

Pinguicula vulgaris

Utricularia purpurea

Northern Spikemoss

Water Tape Grass

Common Reed

Fen Sedge

Tufted Club Rush

Linear Sundew

English Sundew

Butterwort

Purple Bladderwort

The Four-toed Salamander, rare in Bruce County, has also been seen in the fens. Spotted Turtle, provincially endangered and rare in Southern Bruce County, has also been seen here.

3.3.3 The Woodland Complex

This is the largest natural community of the Park and is made up of swamps, moist forests, low ridges and swales. Approximately 860 of MacGregor Point's 1370 hectares are part of this woodland complex, more than 80 percent of the Park. The woodlands are home to a great diversity of species including numerous provincially rare species of plants, reptiles, amphibians and breeding birds.

The soil is loam (mostly silty or (more often) sandy, sometimes sandy organic) or muck, occasional sand or gravel. Stones are infrequent inland, below the Nipissing Bluff. The moisture regime is variable, from dry to saturated or open water averaging on the dry side of wet-mesic.

The woodland complex is very variable. In general, it is a mixed forest with the coniferous element often predominating close to Lake Huron. With the deciduous element clearly predominating overall, the forest tends to be middle aged with a semi open canopy. It is dominated by red/green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) with significant stands of White Cedar, White Birch, Quaking Aspen and Balsam Poplar and fir. Silky and Red Osier Dogwood are common. Common ground plants include Dwarf Raspberry, Reed Canary Grass, Poison Ivy, Wild Sarsaparilla, Calico Aster, Field Horsetails and sedges. Six provincially rare plants were identified and include:

<i>Calamovilfa longifolia</i> var. <i>magna</i>	Sand Reed Grass
<i>Eleocharis rostellata</i>	Beaked Spikerush
<i>Iris lacustris</i>	Dwarf Lake Iris
<i>Cypripedium arietinum</i>	Ram's Head Lady's Slipper
<i>Astragalus neglectus</i>	Cooper's Milk Vetch
<i>Lithospermum caroliniense</i>	Hairy Puccoon

Nineteen other species rare in Southern Bruce County were also identified and include:

<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Common Reed
<i>Glyceria grandis</i>	Tall Manna Grass
<i>Spartina pectinata</i>	Prairie Cord Grass
<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>	Big Bluestem
<i>Carex sterilis</i>	Fen Sedge
<i>Carex garberi</i>	Garber's Sedge
<i>Carex vaginata</i>	Sheathed Sedge
<i>Carex prasina</i>	Leek-Green Sedge
<i>Carex pallescens</i>	Pale Sedge
<i>Scirpus cespitosus</i>	Tufted Club Rush
<i>Ranunculus pensylvanicus</i>	Bristly Buttercup
<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>	Low Sweet Blueberry
<i>Epigaea repens</i>	Trailing Arbutus
<i>Cynoglossum boreale</i>	Northern Wild Comfrey
<i>Veronica americana</i>	American Brooklime
<i>Solidago juncea</i>	Early Goldenrod

The Four-toed Salamander, rare in Bruce County has been found in this zone as well as the Spotted Turtle. The provincially rare Black-crowned Night Heron has also nested in this area.

Almost all of the major facilities that have been developed in the Park occur in this woodland complex.

The Ash Pond preferred development site is located on the edge of the open shoreline complex immediately adjacent to and where necessary extending into the woodland complex.

3.3.4 Upland Deciduous Forest

This community occurs mainly above and along the side of the Nipissing Bluff and covers about 65 hectares or five percent of MacGregor Point in several blocks along the entire eastern edge of the Park. In much of the area the topography is level with a steep slope where this community occurs along the edge of the bluff. The soil ranges from loam to a clay loam with some sandy loam in areas. There is a thin layer of muck over the loam in many wet pockets as well as some non-limestone boulder pavements. The moisture regime is mainly dry with many little wet pockets scattered throughout as well as one more extensive wet area.

The forest is mainly middle aged to semi-mature with a mostly closed canopy. The dominant trees are Sugar Maple and White Ash with some Beech and Basswood. The understorey shrub-sapling layer is Sugar Maple with some Choke Cherry and Hop Hornbeam. Dogtooth Violet and a sedge (*Carex pendunculata*) are the ground dominants. One provincially endangered species has been found here but is considered extirpated since 1997. It is also rare in Southern Bruce County.

One other native species rare in southern Bruce County includes:

Carex prasina Leek-Green Sedge

3.3.5 Human Impacted Area

Clearings made for agriculture occupy about 75 hectares or seven percent of MacGregor Point. Additionally, the natural habitat of MacGregor Point have been disturbed by 14 kilometres of road, over 30 kilometres of hiking and biking trails, campgrounds, park buildings, washrooms, a maintenance yard and other associated service buildings.

The Park was logged as recently as 50 years ago and old logging trails are still identifiable. Over the years, considerable pasturing has taken place in what today is parkland. Old fences surround former pasturelands and abandoned hayfields.

Much of the former agriculture lands have loam, fine sand or sandy soils. Considerable sections have grown up with shrubs or young trees. The dominant woody plants include Large Pussy Willow, Hawthorns, Ninebark, Beaked Willow and Silky Dogwood. Ground cover includes Tall Goldenrod, Poverty Oat Grass and Wild Basil.

Although grasses are the most prevalent family overall, an abundance of young planted conifers can be found in some of the human impacted clearings. Two native species that are rare in southern Bruce County were found:

Arabis drummondii Drummond's Rock Cress
Gnaphalium obtusifolium Fragrant Cudweed

3.3.6 Artificial Pond Community

In 1987, a dyke was constructed by Ducks Unlimited Canada near the southern end of the Park to re-establish a wetland that had been drained during a road maintenance project on the adjacent Township road. The intent of this project was to enhance the wildlife values of the

natural environment zone and was consistent with the direction of the Master Plan. An 11 hectare wetland was re-established representing approximately one percent of MacGregor Point.

The moisture regime is open water to some saturated areas at several edges. The soil is muck which often dries in late summer. This leaves considerable muck exposed.

The main species are Green Ash, both alive and dead. The common shrub of this open community is Buttonbush while Water Purslane, sedges and Marsh Cress are among the dominant herbaceous plants. Common Duckweed and spikerush are also prominent. Only one species rare to southern Bruce County was found here:

Penthorum sedoides

Ditch Stonecrop

This area is not only recognized as the most significant area in the Park for migration but also for both water dependent and woodland species of breeding birds. An observation tower and a trail around this area allows visitors to view a wide variety of both flora and fauna.

3.4 Aquatic Resources

Several minor water courses and drainage ditches occur in the Park. Drainage also occurs as horizontal seepage through the sandy and gravel soil. There are 8 to 10 ponds occurring near the shoreline as well as a few beaver ponds and the Artificial Pond community referred to in section 3.3.6. No major streams occur.

3.5 Social and Cultural Concerns

3.5.1 Archaeological Sites

An archaeological study was conducted for MacGregor Point Provincial Park in 1973. The only prehistoric occupation discovered for the Park was in a cultivated field at the base of the Nipissing Bluff. The surface finds were from an Early Archaic site. While no other trace of prehistoric evidence was discovered during the archaeological investigations, the survey team believed that a small number of sites existed along the bluff. The evidence suggested that the prehistoric archaeological resource potential of MacGregor Point was minimal. None of the proposed sites for the Visitor Centre are located near the Nipissing Bluff.

The Visitor Centre is located within 250 metres of the Old Shore Road Trail which is situated on an historic land transportation route that connected Southampton to Kincardine in the mid-1800s. It is also within 300 metres of the shores of Lake Huron. In light of this, a Checklist for Determining High/Low Potential for Cultural Heritage Resources (Appendix A) was completed. Although the site screens for high potential for cultural heritage resources, construction activities will not impact either the Old Shore Road Trail or the shore of Lake Huron. Archaeological investigations in 1973 had determined that the potential for prehistoric archaeological resources to be located within the Park were minimal. Therefore, we feel we can proceed with this site location confident that no cultural heritage resources will be impacted.

3.5.2 First Nations

The input of both the Chippewas of Saugeen and the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nations was invited early in the consultation and planning process. Their participation was encouraged throughout the process.

3.5.3 Park Visitors

Park visitation statistics for both day use and campsite use are recorded annually. This will be continued. In addition, statistics related to use of the Visitor Centre, Natural Heritage Education program use and attendance during Friends events are maintained. These figures will be evaluated to determine use trends.

The number of campsites occupied from 2003 to 2006 has been consistently around 28,000 and day-use visitation has been in the neighborhood of 27,000. In the same time period, from 2003 to 2006, the NHE Program experienced a minimal growth in individual program attendance. Visitation to the Visitor Centre itself however, dropped approximately 8% in that same time period. In 2006, staff recorded approximately 13,000 visits to the Visitor Centre and 11,000 program contacts.

3.6 Constraints and Opportunities

For the development of a new or upgraded Visitor Centre or phased Visitor Centre complex at MacGregor Point at the preferred Ash Pond site, a number of constraints and opportunities were identified. Constraint factors include:

- Expansion into the open shoreline complex;
- Expansion into the fen-pond complex.

The extent of the various constraint factors is presented in Figure 3-6. The areas, outside of these constraint features represent opportunities for development. Here, natural features are less significant and less fragile. The existing and former entrance roads offer safe vehicular access and egress. The existing trails will allow for the maintenance of the existing pedestrian access by campers and day visitors from the Old Shore Road Trail as well as the interior park access road. Opportunity factors include:

- Existing Visitor Centre road and parking lot;
- Existing services – water, power, telephone, sewage (the line is present but not operational at the present time);
- Accessible trails tied into facility;
- Central to campgrounds and day-use areas;
- Suitable for year round access; and
- Overall aesthetics of site.

3.7 Natural Hazards Policies

MacGregor Point is part of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System. The Provincial Policy Statement made under the *Planning Act* contains the Great Lakes Hazard Policies (MNR, 2001). According to Section 3.1.2 of the Policies, development and site alteration will generally not be permitted within *defined portions* of the Dynamic Beach. The definition and delineation of

the Dynamic Beach Hazard Zone is based on criteria related to such factors as the type and depth of the beach material, length and width of the beach, wave exposure, the 100-year floodline, the wave up-rush zone, and an additional setback distance.

A study for a site-specific application of the Natural Hazards Policies has been conducted for the existing Visitor Centre/Ash Pond project site. The study defines the site-specific flooding hazard and delineates the extent of the dynamic beach. At the existing Visitor Centre/Ash Pond project site, the distance measured was from the assumed high water mark (the leeward side of the first row of trees along the beach) to an extrapolated corner of the proposed Visitor Centre, along a straight line from the high water mark. This measurement was approximately 56 metres from the high water mark to the edge of the Visitor Centre's existing foundation. Therefore, the inland extent of the defined portion of the dynamic beach coincides approximately with a distance that can be considered no less than 26 metres from the western side of the existing Visitor Centre/Ash Pond project site.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Description of the Alternatives

As part of the planning process, three alternative development site scenarios were generated for the MacGregor Point project. Figure 2-1 shows the location of the three alternative locations within the Park as they relate to existing facilities. All three alternatives would use a similar sized footprint for the Visitor Centre and the parking area.

Ash Pond Site (preferred site and existing Visitor Centre site)

The Visitor Centre at the Ash Pond site involves either removal of the existing building and construction of a new building, upgrading and expansion of the existing building or upgrading and expansion as a phased complex. This expansion would be into the coniferous woodland complex to the east. By expanding the footprint of the complex in this direction, it would minimize encroachment on the open shoreline complex or the adjacent fen-pond complex to the south, both identified as areas of concern in the recent reconnaissance life science survey for MacGregor Point. This site utilizes the existing services, road and parking lot entrance for the existing Visitor Centre and allows for a direct link to the accessible Huron Fringe Trail and the Old Shore Road Trail. The Ash Pond site has already experienced disturbance from prior development.

Turtle Pond Site

The Turtle Pond site is located northwest of the existing Visitor Centre parking lot in the area behind the entrance to the Huron Fringe Trail. It would utilize nearby existing services, road and parking lot entrance for the existing Visitor Centre. It would also allow a direct link to the accessible Huron Fringe Trail and the Old Shore Road Trail. Mitigation related to the position of the building(s) and the potential for disturbance of nearby campsites would need to be considered. The future of the existing Visitor Centre building adjacent to open shoreline dune complex would need to be considered.

Woodland Site

The Visitor Centre in the Woodland site would be located approximately 50 metres to the southeast of the existing campers' beach parking lot. It would utilize the existing road and parking lot entrance for the campers' beach parking lot. Services would need to be extended to this area and the parking lot extended. With some trail development, it could allow for direct access to the Old Shore Road Trail and the Deer Run Bike Trail.

Figure 4 - Constraints and Opportunities

Constraints and Opportunities

MacGregor Point

Lake
Huron

Woodland complex
(excluding upland deciduous forest)

Upland deciduous forest

Fen-pond complex

Open shoreline complex

Man-made clearing community
(including successional old clearings)

Open artificial flood or pond community
(part of a Ducks Unlimited flood)

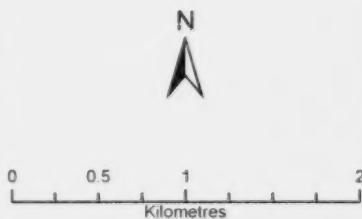
Study Area

Roads

Townlines

Contours (2.5m)

Water



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Produced by Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone

This map is for illustrative purposes only.
Do not rely on it as being a precise indicator of
Rimrock locations or features nor as a guide to
Navigation.





Final Building Complex Location (Ash Pond Site)

In order to ensure policy compliance with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Provincial Policy Statement (1997) on Dynamic Beach Hazards, a site-specific study has been conducted (March 2, 2005). The proposed Visitor Centre at the Ash Pond site will be located outside of the 'Defined Portion of the Dynamic Beach'. The exact position of the building complex will be determined based on the results of this study and site-specific engineering and design work.

4.2 Environmental Checklist

The Environmental Analysis of Alternatives is carried out using the Environmental Checklist developed by the MNR (Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans, MNR Bulletin PM 11.03.01). The purpose of the checklist is to assist with identifying and considering the array of environmental components, which may be affected by the undertaking. The checklist is summarized as follows:

Terrestrial Resources

Topography and landforms
Geology
Surface drainage
Soil type, texture, permeability
Erosion and other hazard lands
Forest cover
Ground cover
Wildlife habitat

Land Use

Public recreational use
Commercial recreational use
Transportation and access
Utility corridors (e.g., hydro, gas, etc.)
Water, sewage, and solid waste
Existing development & alienated lands

Aquatic Resources

Waste disposal
Shoreline characteristics
Water level fluctuations
Flow characteristics
Aquatic vegetation
Fish species, habitat
Water quality (recreation, potability)

Social Concerns

Public health and safety, quality of life
Economic impacts (positive and negative)
Noise pollution
Scenic quality
Significant natural features
Significant historical features

Table 4-1: Environmental Analysis – Description of Alternatives

Environmental Component (Environmental Checklist)	Do Nothing	Alternative Location 1 Ash Pond Site Existing Visitor Centre location	Alternative Location 2 Turtle Pond Site	Alternative Location 3 Woodland Site
		Environmental Effects	Environmental Effects	Environmental Effects
TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES				
Topography and landforms	Micro-topography and landforms along the shoreline will continue to change in response to wave action, currents, sedimentation, erosion and wind action. No changes in backshore portion of site.	Development of the Visitor Centre will require limited filling for the expanded footprint of the building.	Development of the Visitor Centre at this site will require limited filling for the footprint of the building.	Development of the Visitor Centre at this site will require limited filling for the footprint of the building. Due to the terrain, additional filling of swales or wet areas may also be required.
Geology	No geological changes.	No geological impact.	No geological impact.	No geological impact.
Surface drainage	Existing drainage patterns will be allowed to fluctuate with natural and anthropogenic influences.	Redevelopment of the Visitor Centre at this site should not alter existing drainage patterns.	Construction of the Visitor Centre at this site should not alter existing drainage patterns.	Construction of the visitor centre and access pathways could alter existing drainage patterns and flows in this area.
Soil type, texture, permeability	There should be no changes in this area.	Changes restricted to footprint of development concept.	Changes restricted to footprint of development concept.	Changes restricted to footprint of development concept.
Erosion and other hazard lands	Damage to the shore dune complex from indiscriminate access.	Potential for increased erosion of shore dune from increased visitor access to the area. Proper trail development, designated beach access points and visitor education to be used to minimize disturbance of shore dune complex and fens adjacent to this area; the existing site has operated here for over 20 years with minimal impact.	Potential for increased erosion of shore dune from increased visitor access to the area. Proper trail development, designated beach access points and visitor education to be used to minimize disturbance of shore dune complex and fens adjacent to this area; the existing site has operated here for over 20 years with minimal impact.	No concerns for erosion or other hazards at this site.
Forest cover	Existing regeneration and succession will continue.	Some loss of forest cover will occur at this site. Least overall loss of forest cover due to extensive utilization of already developed and disturbed areas. Affected forest cover represents White Cedar and Red Pine successional mixed stands. Some loss of dune vegetation may occur.	Total loss of forest cover approximately 0.2 hectares. There would however be utilization of already developed and disturbed areas. Affected forest cover represents White Cedar and Red Pine successional mixed stands. No loss of dune vegetation.	Total loss of forest cover approximately 2.5 hectares. Affected forest community represents a middle-aged, semi-open woodland complex. No loss of dune vegetation.
Ground cover	Disturbance of dune vegetation and forest ground cover through recreational uses will continue and will likely increase with increasing visitor numbers.	Potential for increased disturbance of existing dune vegetation and ground cover as a result of increased visitor numbers and use levels. Impacts can be minimized through visitor management including designated trails and beach access points, interpretive and educational signage.	Potential for increased disturbance of existing dune vegetation and ground cover as a result of increased visitor numbers and use levels. Impacts can be minimized through visitor management including designated trails and beach access points, interpretive and educational signage.	Potential for increased disturbance of existing ground cover as a result of increased visitor numbers. Impacts can be minimized through visitor management including designated trails, interpretive and educational signage.
Wildlife habitat	Disturbance of vegetation cover and thus wildlife habitat qualities through recreational uses will continue in areas of heavy use and will likely increase in intensity with increasing visitor numbers.	Some increase in disturbance of vegetation cover and thus wildlife habitat qualities. The visitor centre and parking would be located in an area that has served as a natural buffer to a high intensity use area.	No to little increase in disturbance of vegetation cover and thus wildlife habitat qualities since visitor centre and parking would be located in a developed and high intensity use area.	Disturbance of vegetation cover and thus wildlife habitat qualities through recreational uses will occur. Visitors, recreation activities and parking are directed into forest where existing recreational use levels are very low.

Environmental Component (Environmental Checklist)	Do Nothing	Alternative Location 1 Ash Pond Site Existing Visitor Centre location	Alternative Location 2 Turtle Pond Site	Alternative Location 3 Woodland Site
Special features (e.g., species at risk)	Interpretive signs and programming related to species at risk will continue. Visitors will continue to be managed through the use of designated trails and access points.	Interpretive signs and programming related to species at risk will continue. Visitors will continue to be managed through the use of designated trails and access points. There will be no direct impact on any known locations of species at risk.	Interpretive signs and programming related to species at risk will continue. Visitors will continue to be managed through the use of designated trails and access points. There will be no direct impact on any known locations of species at risk.	Interpretive signs and programming related to species at risk will continue. Visitors will continue to be managed through the use of designated trails and access points. Impacts on any known species at risk will be minimal.
AQUATIC RESOURCES				
Shoreline characteristics	Littoral bathymetry and micro-topography of the beach area will remain subject to continuous change as a result of wave action, currents, sedimentation, erosion and wind action.	No effects anticipated.	No effects anticipated	No effects anticipated.
Water level fluctuations	Lake water levels and the fen pond and swamp levels will continue to vary, depending on seasonal and yearly climate variations, and weather conditions.	No effects anticipated.	No effects anticipated	No effects anticipated.
Flow characteristics	Flow characteristics of fens and swamps will not be altered.	No effects anticipated.	No effects anticipated	No effects anticipated.
Aquatic vegetation	No change to existing situation.	No effects anticipated.	No effects anticipated	No effects anticipated
Fish species, habitat	No change to existing situation.	No effects anticipated.	No effects anticipated	No effects anticipated
Water quality	No change to existing situation.	Potential for inflow of contaminated and nutrient rich runoff from parking area and access road. Can be minimized through run off detention and infiltration. Stormwater management, through the use of storm runoff ponds, will be required.	Potential for inflow of contaminated and nutrient rich runoff from parking area and access road. Can be minimized through run off detention and infiltration. Stormwater management, through the use of storm runoff ponds, will be required.	Potential for inflow of contaminated and nutrient rich runoff from parking area and access road into the forested wetland. Can be minimized through run off detention and infiltration. Stormwater management, through the use of storm runoff ponds, will be required.
LAND USE				
Public recreational use	Existing seasonal access, camping, interpretive program and day-use will be maintained. Vault toilets will continue to be used.	The redevelopment of the Visitor Centre to year round facility will extend into quiet off- seasons. Vault toilets would be replaced by barrier free washrooms incorporated into a new building. Little adverse effects anticipated for existing recreational uses.	The redevelopment of the Visitor Centre to year round facility will extend into quiet off- seasons. Vault toilets would be replaced by barrier free washrooms incorporated into the new building. Little adverse effects anticipated for existing recreational uses.	The redevelopment of the Visitor Centre to year round facility will extend into quiet off- seasons. Little adverse effects anticipated for existing recreational uses.
Commercial recreational use	Not part of existing program.	Not part of proposed program at this point in time.	Not part of proposed program at this point in time.	Not part of proposed program at this point in time.
Transportation and access	Existing year round day-use and camping season will be maintained and include the Visitor Centre.	Concept utilizes existing entrance for winter camping and continued plowing of the interior road required for winter access.	Concept utilizes existing entrance for winter camping and continued plowing of the interior road required for winter access.	Concept utilizes existing entrance for winter camping with additional plowing of 0.5 kilometres of interior road required for winter access.

Environmental Component (Environmental Checklist)	Do Nothing	Alternative Location 1 Ash Pond Site Existing Visitor Centre location	Alternative Location 2 Turtle Pond Site	Alternative Location 3 Woodland Site
Utility corridors (e.g., hydro, water, etc.)	No change to existing situation.	Existing hydro, water line and utilities to be utilized.	Existing hydro, water line and utilities to be utilized.	Existing water line to be utilized and extended as required. Underground hydro and telephone will need to be extended along the camper beach access road to this area to tie in with park system.
Sewage and solid waste	Existing waste collection facilities and pickup will continue. Sewage system will be piped into the existing park system. Vault toilets are pumped and waste disposed of off site.	Existing waste collection facilities and pickup will continue. Vault toilets to be replaced by barrier free washrooms incorporated into the new building complex and wastewater from new facility to be piped to tile beds within the Park. Solid waste management to be integrated with campground 3R-activities, collection and disposal services.	Existing waste collection facilities and pickup will continue. Vault toilets to be replaced by barrier free washrooms incorporated into the new building complex and wastewater from new facility to be piped to tile beds within the Park. Solid waste management to be integrated with campground 3R-activities, collection and disposal services.	Existing waste collection facilities and pickup will continue; pipeline will need to be installed to move wastewater from new facility to be piped to tile beds within the Park. Solid waste management to be integrated with campground 3R-activities, collection and disposal services. Vault toilets at existing site to be maintained.
Existing development & alienated lands	No change to existing situation.	Maximum utilization of existing parking, trails and roads.	Maximum utilization of existing parking, trails and roads.	Maximum utilization of existing parking and roads.
SOCIAL CONCERNS				
Public health and safety, quality of life	No change to existing situation.	Natural Heritage Education program delivery to the public will be enhanced.	Natural Heritage Education program delivery to the public will be enhanced.	Natural Heritage Education program delivery to the public will be enhanced.
Economic impacts (positive and negative)	No change to existing situation.	Facility will add to the attractiveness of MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Facility will contribute to increase park visitor numbers and associated economic spin offs.	Facility will add to the attractiveness of MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Facility will contribute to increase park visitor numbers and associated economic spin offs.	Facility will add to the attractiveness of MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Facility will contribute to increase park visitor numbers and associated economic spin offs.
Waste disposal/Recycling	Existing waste collection/ recycling facilities, pickup, and disposal services will continue.	Solid waste management to be integrated with recycling activities, collection and disposal services currently provided for the existing campground.	Solid waste management to be integrated with recycling activities, collection and disposal services currently provided for the existing campground.	Solid waste management to be integrated with recycling activities, collection and disposal services currently provided for the existing campground.
Noise pollution	No change over existing situation.	No change over existing situation.	Possible impact to campers in Ash Loop of Algonquin Campground or camper noise impact on the Turtle Pond Site.	No change over existing situation.
Scenic quality	High scenic value of site will continue.	High scenic value of site will continue. Building, access road and parking area will be integrated with existing forest cover and open shoreline dune complex. Visitor Centre will be visible from the lake.	High scenic value of site will continue. Building, access road and parking area will be integrated with existing forest cover.	Building, access road and parking area will be integrated with existing forest cover.

Environmental Component (Environmental Checklist)	Do Nothing	Alternative Location 1 Ash Pond Site Existing Visitor Centre location	Alternative Location 2 Turtle Pond Site	Alternative Location 3 Woodland Site
Significant natural features	No change is anticipated to the significant natural features of the sites.	Significant natural site features are the existing rocky shoreline, low dunes, associated vegetation, mixed coniferous forest and fen ponds. No change anticipated. Visitor management, interpretive and educational signage will alleviate potential for negative impacts from increased visitor numbers and intensified use levels.	Significant natural site features that include a mixed coniferous forest and fen pond will be maintained. Visitor management, interpretive and educational signage will alleviate potential for negative impacts from increased visitor numbers and intensified use levels.	The significant natural feature that includes the woodland complex will be maintained. Visitor management, interpretive and educational signage will alleviate potential for negative impacts from increased visitor numbers and intensified use levels.
Significant historical features	No change to existing situation.	No archaeological features were located on the site.	No archaeological features were located on the site.	No archaeological features were located on the site.

Table 5-1: Selection of the Preferred Development Scenario

Environmental Component (Environmental Checklist)	Do Nothing	Alternative Location 1: Ash Pond Site Existing Visitor Centre location	Alternative Location 2: Turtle Pond Site	Alternative Location 3: Woodland Site
Environmental Effects	Negative impact of recreational activities on dune formation, dune vegetation and forest ground cover will continue.	Overall environmental impact anticipated to be low. Most of new development to be realized in a previously developed and disturbed area. Concept maximizes use of existing road and trail system and does not introduce new and intensive uses to currently quiet and under-utilized areas.	Overall environmental impact anticipated to be low. Large part of concept utilizes already developed and disturbed areas. Concept maximizes use of existing road, parking and trail system. In part, concept introduces new and intensive uses to somewhat quiet and under-utilized areas. There would be a higher impact than Alternative Location 1.	Overall environmental impact anticipated to be low to moderate. New development to be located away from intensive use area. Concept utilizes mostly undisturbed areas in woodland complex with little recent disturbance. Concept introduces new uses and higher use intensities to currently quiet and underutilized area. There would be a higher impact than Alternative Locations 1 and 2
Public Input	Final posting occurred.	Final posting occurred.	Final posting occurred.	Final posting occurred.
Effectiveness	Visitor services to continue based on existing information infrastructure.	Visitor Centre located conveniently close to campsites and to existing amphitheatre for year round use. Large variety of natural features immediately adjacent to building site allows for effective site related education and interpretation from within and around the building. Efficient access and parking system. Little or no impact of campers on site. Visitor Centre experience can be controlled.	Visitor Centre located conveniently close to campsites and to existing amphitheatre for year round use. Large variety of natural features immediately adjacent to building site allows for effective site related education and interpretation from within and around the building. Efficient access and parking system. Little impact on campers nearby. Visitor Centre experience can be controlled.	Visitor Centre located further from trails, winter campgrounds and campfire circle. The woodland complex immediately adjacent to building site allows for site related education and interpretation from within and around the building.

Environmental Component (Environmental Checklist)	Do Nothing	Alternative Location 1 Ash Pond Site Existing Visitor Centre location	Alternative Location 2 Turtle Pond Site	Alternative Location 3 Woodland Site
Feasibility	Not applicable.	Construction will impact camper experience since the use of the existing visitor centre would be closed to allow for either redevelopment or construction at this site. Alternate arrangements for interpretation/education would need to be put into place during construction. There would be the potential for conflict between recreational and construction traffic during the construction phase. Safety would be an issue during construction. A strategic plan for operations during construction will need to be prepared.	The existing centre can remain operational until the construction of this site is completed. Conflict between recreation and construction related vehicular traffic anticipated during construction phase. Construction will impact camper experience. Safety an issue during construction. A strategic plan for operations during construction will need to be prepared.	The existing centre would remain open during the construction of this site. Minimal conflict between recreation and construction related vehicular traffic would be anticipated.
Cost	No change over present levels.	Lowest cost.	Higher costs which will include the disposal of the existing building.	Highest costs due to utility & service extensions, trail redevelopment and disposal of existing building.

5 SELECTION OF THE PREFERRED DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

5.1 Selection Criteria

In order to identify among the three alternative development scenarios, the scenario preferred for development of a Visitor Centre, each scenario was evaluated considering the criteria developed by the MNR Guidelines for the Preparation on Implementation Plans (MNR Bulletin PM 11.03.01):

- Potential environmental effects;
- Public input;
- Effectiveness;
- Feasibility; and
- Cost.

The results are presented in Table 5-1.

5.2 The Preferred Development Scenario

Overall, The Ash Pond site (Alternative Location 1) is the preferred scenario for development of a Visitor Centre. Much of the footprint for the building or building complex is presently disturbed. Potential adverse effects on the natural environment can be mitigated and the site vicinity rehabilitated and used for interpretation and demonstration purposes. At the Ash Pond site, the interpretive and educational objectives of the Visitor Centre can be effectively achieved; the construction and operation of the Centre is most feasible; and development costs are comparatively low.

Taking all aspects into consideration, **the proposal is to proceed with the Visitor Centre at the Ash Pond site.** The design and construction on this site will expand on the existing footprint of the use area at the present Visitor Centre. The design and construction will recognize that a phased in approach that may make use of a complex of buildings will be the most feasible approach. It will also respect the adjacent open shoreline complex and will minimally impact the mature coniferous woodland complex. A 15 metre buffer will be maintained related to Ash Pond. All construction related impacts will be mitigated. Upon completion, the construction site will be rehabilitated.

6 IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

By locating the Visitor Centre at Ash Pond, i.e., in an area designated for development, the adverse environmental impact of developing such a facility is minimized. This section establishes strategies and guidelines for the implementation of the Visitor Centre at Ash Pond that are suitable to further avoid, minimize, and mitigate adverse environmental impacts that may result from the construction and the operation of the facility at the preferred construction site.

It is anticipated, that upon completion of all construction work and following the application of the various mitigation measures, the Visitor Centre will be integrated with the site's natural environment. The surrounding landscape will be restored to a near-natural state.

Mitigation Measures – Pre-Construction Phase

During the design phase of the Visitor Centre, consideration will be made to ensure that “green” technologies are incorporated. Where feasible, wind power, solar power, energy efficient lighting, low-e glass windows and other environmentally friendly technologies will be considered for use within the proposed Visitor Centre. Staff will review preliminary designs to ensure that they compliment the natural landscapes around the Visitor Centre, that natural lighting is beneficially used and to provide comments and recommendations related to potential construction impacts and conflicts.

6.1 Mitigation Measures - Construction Phase

The construction of the proposed Visitor Centre and associated services will affect the natural environment and recreational uses at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. For the most part, these impacts will be temporary and minimized through the application of mitigation measures. Table 6-1 discusses key construction activities and issues, together with recommended mitigation measures.

6.2 Mitigation Measures – Operational (Post-Construction) Phase

The operation of the proposed Visitor Centre and associated services, access road and parking, bears the potential for continuous impact on the natural environment and recreational uses at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. To avoid and minimize these impacts, a number of mitigation measures have been developed. These are discussed in Table 6-2.

6.3 Project Schedule

Construction activities are anticipated to begin in early fall / late fall of Year One with an envisaged completion date of spring/summer in Year Two.

Table 6-1: Mitigation Measures – Construction Phase

Issue	Mitigation Measures – Construction Phase
Establishing work site; Site clearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep work site as small as possible; utilize parking lot area as staging area and for material storage. ▪ Keep construction site and construction activities off the low dune/open shoreline area. ▪ Maintain and protect a vegetative buffer strip of at least 15 metres from Ash Pond. ▪ Stake out and clearly demarcate boundary of work area; fence-off Ash Pond (fen) buffer zone and boundary to low dune/open shoreline area. ▪ Prior to removal of ground cover, temporary erosion and sediment control structures will be in place, where necessary. ▪ Identify, mark and protect any trees at the perimeter of the construction site and those that are to be retained within the construction site; individual trees, in particular large diameter trees, to be fenced-off to protect stem and root system (i.e. Fence around stem to follow circle with diameter of tree crown). ▪ Timber to be felled inward toward the work site to avoid damage to trees outside the area. ▪ Use larger timber in construction or landscaping, where practical. ▪ During grubbing operation, remove and stockpile any top soil for later site rehabilitation. ▪ Slash from clearing operations will be removed. It must not be allowed to enter or obstruct Ash Pond/fen or be pushed into the low dune/open shoreline area. Push-outs generally do not enhance visual aesthetics and will be avoided.
Site access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The access route to and from the actual construction site will be designated; all construction vehicle traffic will be restricted to this route. ▪ Maintain a vegetation buffer between temporary construction access and access routes and areas utilized by campground visitors and, as much as possible, to visually screen construction activities.
Excavations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When spoil is deposited in the work area, eventual runoff will not be allowed to directly enter surface waters to avoid sediment loading of Ash Pond/fen. ▪ Dewatering: when pumps are used to dewater parts of the site, the discharge from the pumps will not be discharged directly into Ash Pond/fen. Temporary water control would include a sediment basin.
Site grading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimize overall area to be graded. ▪ Integrate natural terrain contours into overall design.
Vehicle servicing and maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fuels, oils, chemicals and other toxic substances will be stored as far away as possible from the Ash Pond/fen area and the low dune, open shoreline area. ▪ Refueling operations will take place in the parking lot. ▪ Every effort will be made to prevent accidental spills. ▪ The construction supervisor will consult Ontario Parks/MOE staff in determining emergency clean-up operations in the event of an accidental spill. ▪ Water used to clean trucks, chutes and mixers will not be allowed to enter Ash Pond/fen; Turtle Pond or Lake Huron. Instead, these waters will be allowed to percolate through the soil in the parking lot to reduce the concentration of lime in them. This may necessitate the construction of berms and divergence channels in an effort to retain such waters and to allow time for percolation.

Issue	Mitigation Measures – Construction Phase
Storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cement will be stored indoors, or if outdoors, covered with plastic sheeting and raised platforms to prevent runoff from being affected by the material. Fuels, oils, chemicals and other toxic substances will be stored as far away as possible from Ash Pond/fen and Turtle Pond and the low dune, open shoreline complex.
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upon completion of the construction and prior to rehabilitation and landscaping work, debris will be collected and disposed of at an approved solid waste disposal site (including scrap metal, packaging material, containers and other waste). Efforts will be made to recycle, where possible.
Dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To minimize negative impact on the visitor's experience, dust measures will be undertaken especially as it relates to the excessive dust of construction traffic. Water and woodchips are an effective and safe means of dust control.
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The construction site is located between two of the Park's campgrounds and recreational uses will continue during construction. To minimize negative impact on the visitor's experience, noise originating from construction machinery will be minimized as much as possible. All engine hoods, mufflers, wheels and tracks will be properly maintained to reduce high sound levels. Construction during periods such as evening, night and early morning hours will be restricted from April to September.
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The construction site is located between two of the Park's campgrounds and recreational uses will continue during construction. To minimize negative impact on the visitor's park experience, good housekeeping should be applied in the operation and organization of the construction site. Vegetation buffers and temporary hoarding will be used to screen the site from public access roads, trails and the shore of Lake Huron where practical.
Erosion and sedimentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and implement an erosion and sediment control plan, as needed, before commencing with construction activities. Particular effort should be spent on diverting run off away from Ash Pond/fen and the low dune open shoreline areas, as it would impact fragile beach vegetation. Temporary erosion and sediment control may include: sediment basins, filters (filter fences, brush barriers, filter berms, dams (straw bales, sand bags or stone).
Existing Visitor Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All building materials removed from the existing Visitor Centre that will not be reused will not be stored at the construction site.
Vegetation/site restoration and landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In locating and designing the Visitor Centre, associated services, access road and parking area, the cutting of forest cover should be minimized; no structures should be constructed on the low dunes or open shoreline. No clearing operations will be carried out in areas suitable for migratory breeding bird habitat during the period from May 15 to July 23. Construction activities, machinery and material storage will be kept off the low dunes and open shoreline. In restoring the construction site, the characteristics of the existing forest, open shoreline and low dune habitats will be used as a guiding principle for re-establishing vegetation cover. Plant species used in re-vegetating the site will be indigenous and typical to the site area. Plantings, if necessary in combination with berms, swales, natural obstacles, boardwalks, paths, etc. will be used for guiding visitors away from sensitive Ash Pond/fen, low dune and open shoreline vegetation.

Issue	Mitigation Measures – Construction Phase
Heritage archaeology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If archaeological evidence is found, work in the area will be halted, the archaeological evidence assessed by a qualified archaeology consultant and in consultation with the Ministry of Culture and the client, further action will be determined. Local First Nations will be notified.
Recreational use; Visitor management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public access to the construction site will be restricted; notice of construction will be posted at the entrance to the work site and, where necessary, a barrier or gate with a lock put in place. To the extent possible, recreation related vehicular traffic will be kept separate from construction traffic. Interpretive programs outlining the proposed Visitor Centre, construction activities and applied mitigation measures are recommended to alleviate negative perceptions, to inform about Park development and management and to demonstrate environmentally sensitive approaches to facility design and construction.
Construction traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employ on-site techniques to minimize nuisance effects (noise, dust and lighting). Close campers' beach to traffic so that road access beyond Algonquin Campground is restricted to construction vehicles.

Table 6-2: Mitigation Measures – Operational (Post-construction) Phase

Issue	Mitigation Measures- Operational (Post-construction) Phase
Stormwater management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater management designs should follow Best Management Practices established by the Ministry of the Environment. The extent of impervious surfaces (asphalt, pavers) should be minimized to maximize water infiltration into the ground. To reduce the off-site movement of stormwater, on-site controls will be used to the fullest extent possible, including: grading to depression sites, ponding in rear areas; discharging of roof leaders into infiltration areas, soak-away pits or cisterns, ditch and grassed swales with low gradients and wide bottoms. No direct discharge of stormwater from roads and parking area into Turtle Pond or Ash Pond/fen.
Water supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treated water within the Park is provided by the Municipality of Saugeen Shores.
Wastewater management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sanitary wastewater collection and disposal system is available on site.

Issue	Mitigation Measures- Operational (Post-construction) Phase
Visitor management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A new/refurbished Visitor Centre will attract many visitors. In addition to the indoor exhibits, visitors will use campfire circle/outdoor amphitheatre and will explore the immediate surroundings of the Visitor Centre. To avoid impact on the vegetation, in particular the fragile low dune, open shoreline area, Ash Pond/fen and Turtle Pond, a visitor management system should be in place once the Visitor Centre opens. ▪ The Huron Fringe Trail may require rerouting so that it can continue to provide an attractive link between the Visitor Centre, parking lot and the Old Shore Road Trail. The system will continue to integrate viewing points at key sites of interest along the trail and interpretive signage. Access to the Huron Fringe Trail should be from a trail head at the Visitor Centre and not from the parking lot. ▪ Boardwalks will continue to offer access to the Old Shore Road Trail without damaging the low dune, open shoreline complex. Access without using the boardwalks will be discouraged through visually non-intrusive barriers such as plantings, logs and vegetated berms. Decks and promenade areas associated with the Visitor Centre will provide linkages from the Visitor Centre to the outdoors. ▪ Signage regarding the use of the trail system should be informative and educational. ▪ Clearly designated picnic sites should be established near the Visitor Centre to minimize damage to the forest floor and low dune, open shoreline vegetation. ▪ Staff vehicles and public access should not share the same walkway. ▪ Bicycle trail looping should be provided to link adjacent trails.
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To visually integrate the Visitor Centre, as much of the site's vegetation and tree growth (in particular large diameter trees) should be preserved and integrated with the site landscaping. ▪ Parking facilities and the boardwalk trail system will continue to be integrated with the existing landscape to the extent possible. ▪ Restoration and site landscaping will maximize the use of plant species typical for the area and will aim at maintaining, restoring and highlighting the natural characteristics of the site. ▪ The parking lot limits should be well defined.
Waste management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The collection system presently in place will be continued once construction is completed. ▪ All outdoor garbage collection containers are bear proof and recycling is encouraged.
Natural Heritage Education program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revise the Park's Natural Heritage Education strategy.

7 PROJECT MONITORING DETAILS

An environmental monitoring program is proposed which is comprised of two components: the construction phase (i.e., from preparing and clearing the site to completion of the building and site services), and the operation phase (i.e., aspects of day operation of the Visitor Centre such as storm and wastewater management, recreational uses at the new facility, traffic flow).

Results of all observations will be recorded and included in the Environmental Assessment File for the project.

7.1 Pre-Construction Monitoring

A variety of preconstruction monitoring has occurred within MacGregor Point Provincial Park and will be continued through regular data collection and monitoring.

The following is a list of many of the studies and reports available. Data that has been collected provides a benchmark from which long term trends or impacts can be determined.

- *A Reconnaissance Survey and Evaluation of Life Science Resources, 1999*
- Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, 1986
- Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, 2006
- Project Feeder Watch, 2004 – 2005
- *MacGregor Point Wetland Complex, Wetland Evaluation 1993*
- Forest Bird Monitoring, Annual
- Spotted Turtle Survey, Annual
- Herptile Survey, Annual
- North American Butterfly Count, Annual
- Christmas Bird Count
- Visitor Statistics, Annual
- Natural Heritage Education Reporting, Annual

7.2 Construction Monitoring

Construction will be undertaken in accordance with existing provincial guidelines, in particular, the *MNR Construction and Mitigation Handbook* and existing industry best site management practices, and mitigation measures identified in Section 6.1 of this report.

Monitoring of the construction process to verify compliance with contract specifications will be undertaken by the construction site representative, or designate, as part of the supervision / monitoring of the project. This should include all aspects of project implementation including the building, parking area, installation of site services, and restoration of the site. The program should place particular importance on monitoring where the protection measures listed below are implemented.

- Protection of the fen ponds including a 15 metre riparian buffer strip;
- Protection of the low dune / open shoreline area;
- Implementation and effectiveness of vegetation and tree protection measures; and
- Implementation and effectiveness of measures to minimize nuisance effects (noise, dust).

7.3 Operational (Post-construction) Monitoring

The goal of the operational monitoring program is to assess the success of the site restoration activities, the visitor management measures, and the storm and wastewater management systems. It is proposed that MNR, Ontario Parks undertakes a program consisting of the following components:

- Inspect and monitor the on-going process of natural regeneration and growth of any planted seeds/vegetation. The inspection should be conducted in the spring of the year following construction, and thereafter at years two and five to assess the progress of the vegetative growth and stabilization works, and the need for remedial repairs.
- Monitor effectiveness of visitor management, i.e., the utilization of designated paths and access points to the Huron Fringe Trail and the Old Shore Road Trail. Where spontaneous new paths through sensitive vegetation and to the shoreline are developing, appropriate guiding measures should be implemented. This could include blocking passage by new plantings, brushwork and berms, educating signage, or the construction of a formal new path or boardwalk.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Natural Heritage Education programs with adjustments to such interpretive media as displays, programs, publication, schedules and NHE strategy.
- Operational audits to assess the condition and safety of the building.
- Maintaining records of the number of Natural Heritage Education programs and attendance as well as the number of people who access the Visitor Centre to satisfy corporate reporting requirements.

8 PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION

Public and agency involvement is critical to the environmental assessment process and forms an integral part of the problem definition, design development, and decision making process.

Various agency and public consultation activities, as prescribed by the MNR's guidelines on the preparation of implementation plans (MNR PM 11.03.01), were conducted as part of the Environmental Study Report. During the process, agency and public contact points included the following stages:

- Invitation to Participate;
- Opportunity to Inspect the Draft Environmental Study Report; and
- Opportunity to Inspect the Final Environmental Study Report.

The following standard clause was included in appropriate ESR notices to address freedom of information and protection of privacy:

Comments and personal information regarding the Environmental Study Report for the MacGregor Point Visitor Centre are collected under the authority of the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act* to assist in making decisions and to determine further public consultation needs relating to the Visitor Centre. Comments and opinions which do not constitute personal information as defined by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, will be shared among MNR, [project proponent, other ministries involved, etc] and may be included in study documentation that is made available for public review. Personal information will remain confidential unless prior consent to disclose is obtained. However, this information may be used by the Ministry of Natural Resources to seek public input on other resource management surveys and

projects. For more information about this project, please contact Norah Toth, Natural Heritage Education Specialist, MacGregor Point Provincial Park.

8.1 Invitation to Participate

Invitation to Participate

The first point of contact with the public occurred with the issuance of an Invitation to Participate. A copy of this Invitation to Participate is provided in Appendix C. This notice was posted within the Park and distributed to members of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park on July 23, 2004.

Initial Public Notice

A second point of contact with the public and parties external to the MNR occurred with the issue of the Initial Public Notice. A copy of the Initial Public Notice is provided in Appendix D. This notice was posted within the Park and appeared in two local newspapers, the Kincardine Independent, and the Shoreline Beacon (Port Elgin). Direct mailings were also made to local First Nations, and to other individuals and agencies from the Park's mailing list including members of the Friends of MacGregor Point Park and the MacGregor Point Cottager's Association.

The Initial Notice was given to all agencies and parties whose interests could potentially be affected by the project. The purpose was to first inform the public and government agencies at an early stage in the process that the project is being proposed and provide them with an opportunity to become involved in the planning of the project. Through the Initial Public Notice, the MNR also requested that the public and government agencies review the proposal being brought forth and comment on how the proposal affects their respective interests. Comments provided by the public and external agencies will be used in completing the environmental analysis for the project.

The Initial Public Notice also informed them of the process which was initiated in accordance with *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*. The planning process will follow Ontario Parks' Policy PM 11.03.01. "*Preparation of Implementation Plans for Provincial Parks*". The Initial Notice invited interested persons to participate in the process.

Agency Notification

A direct letter mailing to all relevant ministries, government agencies, municipalities, tourism associations, and identified business operators was completed during the week of the publication of the newspaper advertisement and included a copy of the published Initial Public Notice.

8.2 Opportunity to Inspect the Draft Environmental Study Report

Second Public Notice

MNR took the comments resulting from the Initial Notice into consideration and prepared a Draft Environmental Study Report. Following the preparation of the Draft Environmental Study Report, a Second Public Notice was issued to all parties directly affected, groups and government agencies, and those parties who responded to the Initial Notice or corresponded with the study team over the course of the study. A sample copy of the Notice of Opportunity to Inspect the Draft ESR is provided in Appendix E.

The purpose of the Second Notice was twofold. Firstly, to notify the public and agencies of the options considered and the selection of the preferred development scenario for a Visitor Centre at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Secondly, to inform them of a 60-day review period for interested parties to review the Draft ESR and associated information at MacGregor Point Provincial Park, the London Zone Office, and the Ontario Parks website (http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/macg_planning.html). The Second Notice was published in two local newspapers, the Kincardine Independent and the Shoreline Beacon, on November 23, 2005.

An Information Notice (EBR XB05E2803) was also posted on the EBR Environmental Registry on November 23, 2005. A copy of the EBR Information Notice is found in Appendix I.

Mail-Out

In addition, 100 letters accompanied by a copy of the Second Notice were mailed to government agencies and to individuals that had requested further information.

8.3 Opportunity to Inspect the Approved Environmental Study Report

Final Public Notice

MNR took the comments resulting from the Second Notice into consideration and prepared the final Environmental Study Report. A Final Public Notice was issued to all parties directly affected, groups and government agencies, and those parties who responded to the Initial and/or Second Notice or corresponded with the study team over the course of the study. A sample copy of the Notice of Completion, Opportunity to Inspect the Final ESR is provided in Appendix F.

The purpose of the Final Notice is twofold. Firstly, to notify the public and agencies of the completion of the ESR. Secondly, to inform them of a 30-day review period to inspect the approved ESR.

The Notice stated that any remaining concerns can be communicated to MNR. If MNR was unable to resolve the concerns, individuals were advised to write to the Ministry of the Environment and request that an individual Environmental Assessment be carried out.

The Final Public Notice was published in two local newspapers, the Kincardine Independent and the Shoreline Beacon, Port Elgin.

Mail-Out

In addition, copies of the Final Notice were mailed to government agencies and to individuals that had requested further information. The mail-out occurred during the week of the publication of the newspaper advertisement and included a copy of the published Final Notice.

8.4 Results of the Public and Agency Consultation

Agency and public comments received either by letter, phone, fax or e-mail were reviewed and incorporated into the environmental study report. A summary of all comments received are

presented in Appendix J. Copies of all correspondence were forwarded to MNR for review and were included in the environmental study report file.

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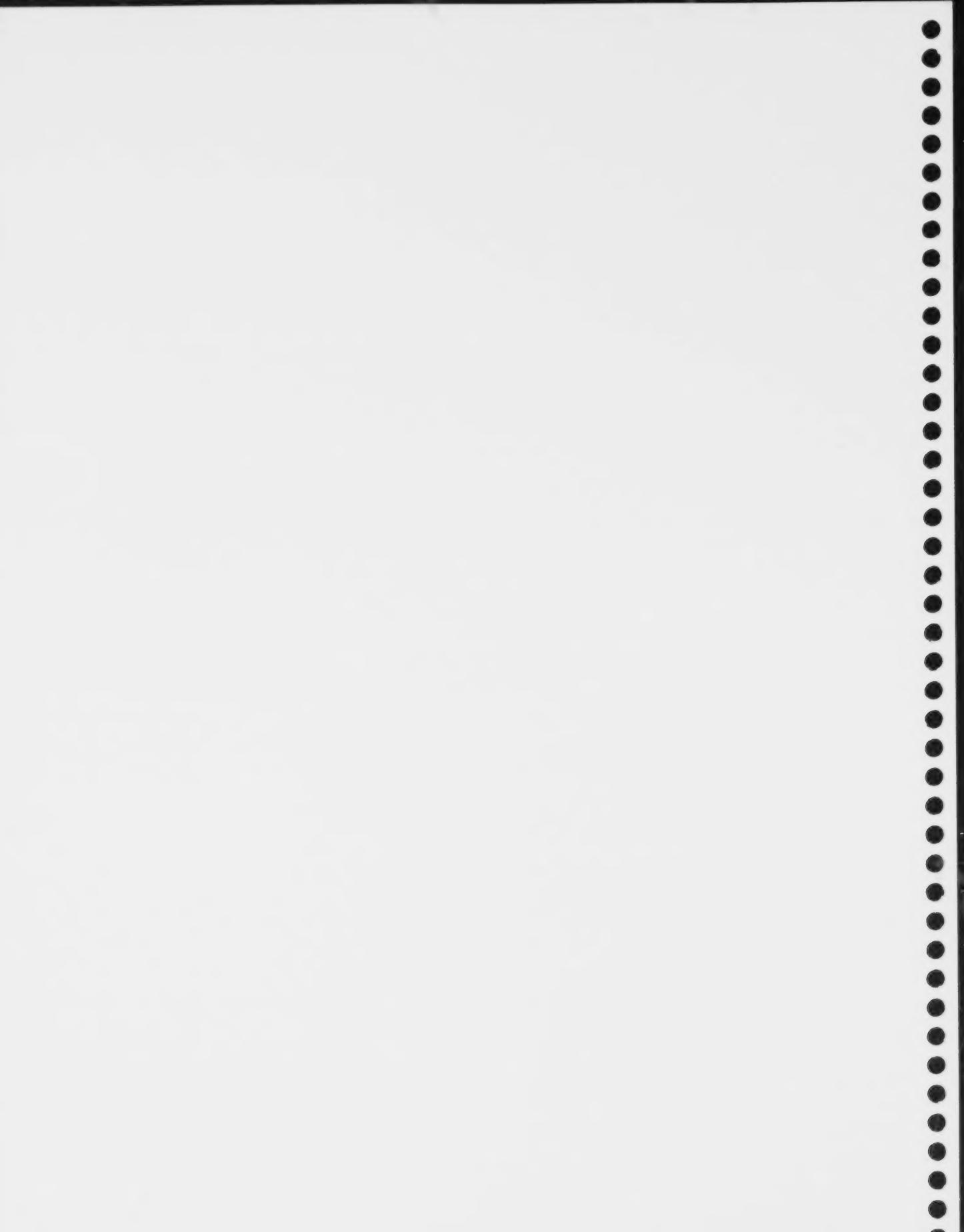
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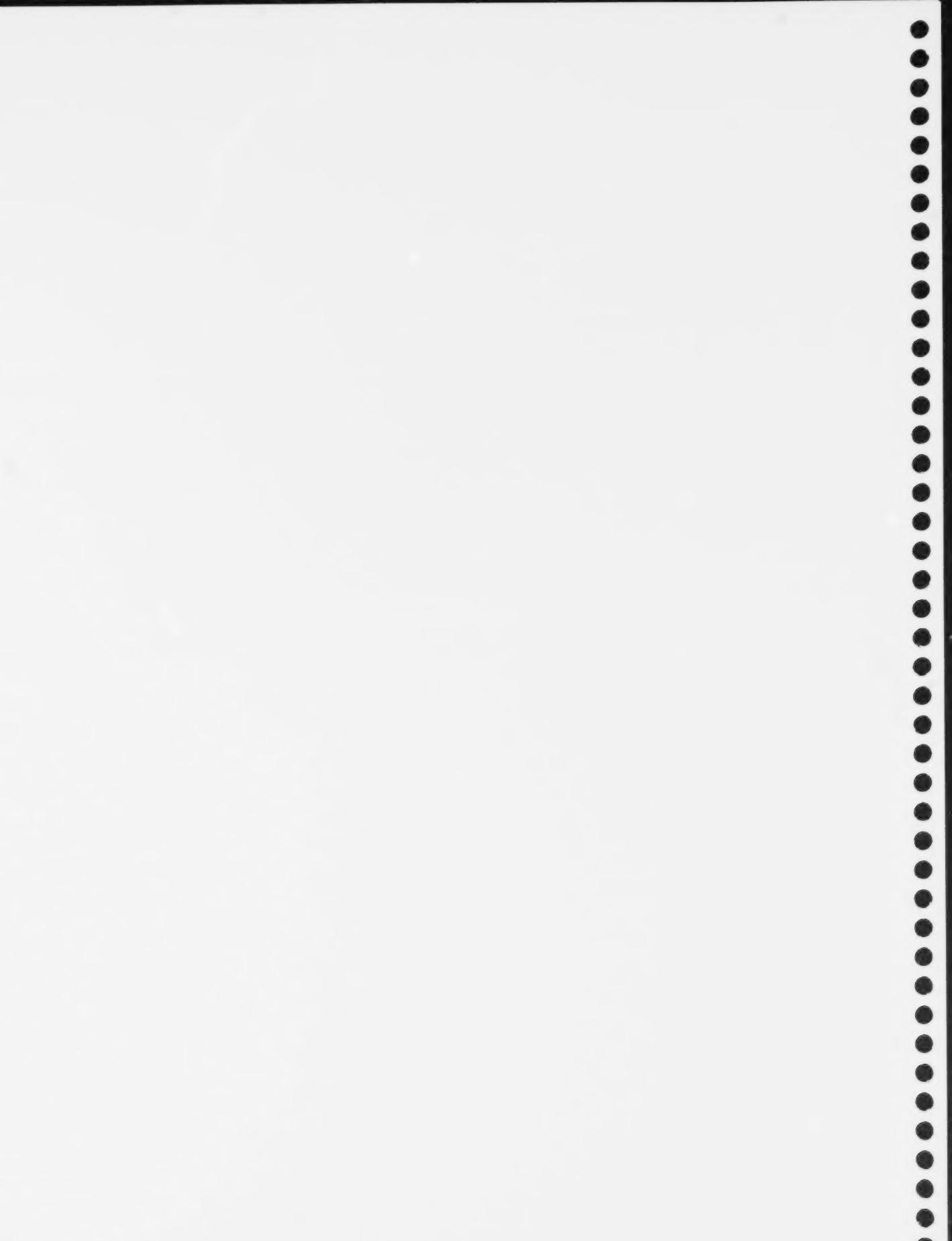
Photos

Photo 1: Visitor Centre front entrance.



Photo 2: Visitor Centre front view





Appendix A: Screening Criteria

Screening Criteria (Class EA for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves)

Name of Project: Visitor Centre Upgrade - MacGregor Point Provincial Park

The reviewer should read each criterion as beginning with the phrase: "*This project may affect....*". All criteria apply to the environment inside as well as outside the provincial park or conservation reserve.

Screening Criteria <i>"This project may affect ..."</i>	Rating of Potential Net Effect								Comments, Rationale
	-H	-M	-L	Nil	Unk	+L	+M	+H	
■ Values for which the provincial park or conservation reserve was established							X		The VC will be available year-round to interpret and enhance understanding of local natural & cultural features
Natural Environment Considerations									
■ Air quality				X					
■ Water quality or quantity (ground or surface)			X						Attention will have to be paid to set backs from ponds
■ Species at risk or their habitat			X						Site design will be important to mitigate potential impacts on species at risk
■ Significant earth or life science features			X						The VC is located within the Huron Fringe
■ Fish or other aquatic species, communities, or their habitat (including numbers, diversity and movement of resident or migratory species)				X					
■ Land subject to natural or human-made hazards				X					
■ Recovery of a species under a special management program (e.g. elk restoration)				X					
■ Ecological integrity			X						The size of the foot print for a VC should not affect the ecological integrity of the site
■ Terrestrial wildlife (including numbers, diversity and movement of resident or migratory species)			X						There should be minimal effect – mitigation measures will be in place
■ Natural vegetation and terrestrial habitat linkages or corridors through fragmentation, alteration and/or critical loss				X					
■ Permafrost				X					
■ Soils and sediment quality				X					
■ Drainage or flooding				X					
■ Sedimentation or erosion				X					
■ Release of contaminants in soils, sediments				X					
■ Natural heritage features and areas (e.g. areas of natural and scientific interest, provincially significant wetlands)				X					
■ Other (specify)				X					
Land Use, Resource Management Considerations									
■ Remoteness (access inaccessible areas)				X					
■ Navigation				X					

Screening Criteria "This project may affect ..."	Rating of Potential Net Effect								Comments, Rationale
	-H	-M	-L	Nil	Unk	+L	+M	+H	
■ Other projects within a park or reserve				X					
■ Other projects outside a park or reserve				X					
■ Traffic patterns or traffic infrastructure			X						A larger VC may impact traffic flow and use of the area
■ Public or private recreation				X					
■ Or create excessive waste materials				X					
■ Or commit a significant amount of a non-renewable resource (e.g. aggregates, agricultural land)				X					
■ Noise levels				X					
■ Views or aesthetics			X						Positioning of the building may impede views of Turtle Pond or Lake Huron
■ Another project or be a precondition or justification for implementing another project				X					
■ Uses, persons or property outside a park or reserve				X					
■ Other (specify)									
Social, Cultural⁴, and Economic Considerations									
■ Archaeology				X					
■ Built heritage				X					
■ Cultural heritage landscapes				X					
■ Sacred or traditional use sites				X					
■ Or displace people, businesses, institutions, or public facilities				X					
■ Community character, enjoyment of property, or local amenities				X					
■ Demands on government services or infrastructure			X						Increased costs related to year-round facility
■ Public health and/or safety				X					
■ Local, regional or provincial economies or businesses					X				Enhance tourism values of Saugeen Shores
■ Tourism values (e.g. resource-based tourist lodge)						X			Enhance ecotourism opportunities
■ Other (specify)									
Aboriginal Considerations									
■ First Nation reserves or communities				X					
■ Spiritual, ceremonial, or cultural sites				X					
■ Traditional land or resources uses, or affect economic activities				X					
■ Aboriginal values				X					
■ Lands subject to land claims				X					
■ Other (specify)									

Completed by: Norah Toth, April 8, 2005

⁴ Where projects may affect a known or suspected cultural resource, further technical heritage studies may be warranted. Technical studies that may be required include items such as archaeological assessments by licensed archaeologists and built heritage studies by qualified heritage consultants if a significant built heritage structural feature is being affected. MNR shall develop a technical guideline, in consultation with the Ministry of Culture, to address how cultural heritage resources should be identified and how to assess their significance and develop mitigation techniques.

Checklist for Determining High/Low Potential for Cultural Heritage Resources⁵

Potential Feature		Yes	No	Unk	Comment
Known Cultural Heritage Resources					
1.	Known cultural heritage resources within 250 m		X		If Yes, high potential determined.
Physiographic Features					
2.	Water – any within 300 metres?	X			If Yes, proceed to questions 2a to 2c
2a.	Primary water source (within 300 m) (lakeshore, river, large creek)	X			If Yes, and yes for any of 3-9, high potential determined.
2b.	Secondary water source (200 m) (stream, spring, marsh, swamp)	X			If Yes, and yes for any of 3-9, high potential determined.
2c.	Ancient water source (300 m) (beach ridge, river bed)		X		If Yes, and yes for any of 3-9, high potential determined.
3.	Elevated topography (knolls, drumlins, eskers, plateaux)		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 4-9, high potential determined.
4.	Extensive Pockets of sandy soil in a clay or rocky area		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 3 or 5-9, high potential determined.
5.	Unusual land formations (mounds, caves, waterfalls)		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 3-4 or 6-9, high potential determined.
Historic Cultural Features					
6.	Extractive area (for food or scarce resources)		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 3-5 or 7-9, high potential determined.
7.	Aboriginal and/or Non-Aboriginal settlement (monuments, cemeteries, villages, etc.)		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 3-6 or 8-9, high potential determined.
8.	Historic transportation route (road, rail, Heritage River, portage route, rapids, shipping route)	X			If Yes, and Yes for any of 3-7 or 9, high potential determined.
9.	Designated property		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 3-8, high potential determined.
10.	Heritage trail, buildings, or ruins that cannot be found through site visit or other means (e.g. flooded area)		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 2-8, or 10-12, high potential determined.
11.	Building or structure over 40 years of age		X		If Yes, and Yes for any of 2-10, or 12, high potential determined.
Application Specific Information					
12.	Local knowledge of cultural heritage resources		X		If Yes, high potential determined.
13.	Recent disturbance (confirmed extensive and intensive)	X			If Yes, low potential.

If High potential for Cultural Heritage Resources is determined to be present, proceed to Section 2.3 of this Guideline

⁵ While this table contains criteria that are relevant to all Cultural Heritage Resource types, the checklist was developed to determine potential for terrestrial archaeological sites. Similar criteria are being developed by the Ministry of Culture to determine potential for other Cultural Heritage Resource types and will be incorporated into this checklist when completed. See Appendix 3 for more detailed information on determining CHR potential and for clarification of the checklist.

Appendix B: Record of Screening Process

Record of Screening Process

Step 1: Assess Project Against List of Projects (Appendix 2)

- Project is listed as Category A or D in Appendix 2 and no further screening is required to determine category. (ID # ____).
- Project is listed in Appendix 2 and requires screening to category. (ID # 44).
- Project is not listed in Appendix 2 and requires screening to determine category.

Step 2: Prepare Project Description

<p>Name of Project Visitor Centre Upgrade – MacGregor Point Provincial Park Provincial Park or Conservation Reserve name and location MacGregor Point Provincial Park, R. R. 1, Port Elgin, Ontario N0H 2C5</p>
Development Zone – Visitor Centre area
<p>Purpose and rationale (problem or opportunity)</p> <p>To upgrade the visitor centre either through an addition to the present facility or the construction of a new facility to meet existing needs. The existing Visitor Centre is very much above capacity. The Park is a year-round park with programming throughout the shoulder seasons; ideally it should have a year-round facility.</p>
<p>Project description, scale, duration</p> <p>To either</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. add onto the existing building – thereby increasing the footprint by 2 to 3 times; (this may be over a 2 to 3 year time span) 2. use the original location and rebuild; 3. or select a nearby location in the development zone and build there
<p>Study area that may be affected</p> <p>The existing Visitor Centre is located in the Ash Swamp/Turtle Pond area. An alternate site (new building) is in the vicinity of Nipissing campground/Campers' Beach/Park Store</p>
<p>Applicable MNR policies, procedures, manuals, guidelines</p> <p>Construction Manuals NHE Policies as related to Minimum Standards MOE</p>
<p>Other required approvals or permits</p> <p>The Visitor Centre upgrade has been posted as a proposed plan and project as per Exemption Order MNR-59/2 Provincial Parks Program</p>

<p>Alternatives to the project and alternative methods of carrying out the project (explain if no alternatives)</p> <p>Maintain Status Quo</p> <p>New facility</p> <p>Addition to existing facility</p> <p>Preliminary evaluation (cost, feasibility, effectiveness, potential effects)</p> <p>Environmental Study Report is being prepared @\$750k</p>
<p>Applicable policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines, and other permits or approvals required to undertake the project (see Appendices 3 and 7)</p>
<p>Provincial Parks Policies and Manuals and Guidelines only</p>
<p>Mitigation features that will apply to the design of the project</p> <p>Energy efficient; avoid any environmentally sensitive areas</p>

Step 3: Assess Against Screening Criteria (per Table 4.1)

<p>Main potential net environmental effects (attach screening table)</p> <p>Potential minimal effects on Species at Risk and their habitat, ecological integrity.</p>
<p>Additional investigation and analysis required to confirm environmental effects</p> <p>ESR proposed</p> <p>Reconnaissance Survey revisited by Jarmo Jalava, Ecologist</p>

Step 4: Assign Project to Appropriate Category

<p>Anticipated level of public or agency concern</p> <p>Notify park patrons, local community through newsletter and newspaper ads</p>
<p>This project has been assigned to Category <u>C</u></p> <p>Brief rationale - Low to Medium potential for significant effects, however some uncertainty related to prediction of effects. Requires additional research and/or evaluation. Effects will require mitigation tailored to the project.</p> <p><u>Norah Toth, Natural Heritage Education Specialist</u></p> <p>Signature and Position (staff member who conducted the screening) Date: <u>April 8, 2005</u></p>

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate

Proposed Visitor Centre Upgrade MacGregor Point Provincial Park

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Parks, is compiling a contact list of members of the public who are interested in participating in the planning of a proposed upgraded Visitor Centre within the park. The Visitor Centre would feature interpretive exhibits and displays, offer educational events related to the natural and cultural resources of the Park and will provide tourism benefits to the park and surrounding communities within the southern Grey-Bruce Tourism Area.

Upgrading of the existing Visitor Centre is being considered based on the fact that the existing building is a three season facility that has reached capacity. Since it was first built in 1977, the natural heritage education program has expanded. The formation of the Friends of MacGregor Point, the development of a retail sales outlet and expanded programming and year round visitation has created a demand that the existing Visitor Centre can no longer support.

Planning for an upgrade to the existing Visitor Centre is a three-step process. The first step involves inviting the public to comment in writing about Ontario Parks' plans to undertake the proposed upgrade. The second step will include a notice of an opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Study Report (ESR). The Draft ESR will be prepared in accordance with the *Environmental Assessment Act* and Ontario Park's objectives. The third step is the release of the completed ESR report.

At the Invitation to Participate stage, the public is invited to submit written concerns or supply additional background information that may assist in the planning of the project.

In order to fully complete these three stages, MNR is compiling a contact list of members of the public. To be placed on the project mailing list, please contact:

Norah Toth
Natural Heritage Education Specialist
MacGregor Point Provincial Park
Tel: 519-389-6231; Fax: 519-389-2444
norah.toth@mnr.gov.on.ca

MacGregor Point Provincial Park is a 1378 hectare Natural Environment Park located along the Lake Huron shoreline and within the Huron Fringe physiographic unit.

This information is being collected for the purpose of planning and implementing the visitor centre at MacGregor Point Provincial Park under the authority of the *Provincial Parks Act*. All input and contact information such as name and address will become part of the public record for this project and administration of the program unless privacy is requested, pursuant to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. For more information on the collection and use of personal information, contact the above noted person.

Appendix D: Initial Public Notice

Proposed Visitor Centre Upgrade MacGregor Point Provincial Park

Invitation to Comment

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Parks is inviting comments on its proposal to upgrade the Visitor Centre at the MacGregor Point Provincial Park, located on Highway 21 approximately five kilometers south of Port Elgin. This project will involve the planning and design of a proposed upgraded Visitor Centre within the development zone of the park. The Visitor Centre would feature interpretive exhibits and displays, other educational events related to the natural and cultural resources of the Park and will provide tourism benefits to the park and surrounding communities within the southern Grey-Bruce Tourism Area. This project is being carried out in accordance with the approved management plan for MacGregor Point Provincial Park.

The proposal will be evaluated as a Category C project under the *Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves*, which requires the preparation of an Environmental Study Report (ESR).

Comments must be received within the 30-day comment period, which will expire on **November 11, 2005**. To discuss the project, to provide comments or to be placed on the project mailing list, please contact:

Norah Toth, Natural Heritage Education Specialist
MacGregor Point Provincial Park
R. R. 1, Port Elgin, Ontario N0H 2C5
Phone: 519-389-6231
Fax: 519-389-9057
Email: norah.toth@mnr.gov.on.ca

There will be at least one additional general notice concerning this project, to be issued on the completion of a Draft ESR. Interested parties are strongly encouraged to discuss any concerns with MNR, early in the planning process.

Comments and personal information regarding this project are collected under the authority of the Environmental Assessment Act and the Provincial Parks Act or Public Lands Act to assist in making decisions. Comments and opinions which do not constitute personal information as defined by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, will be shared among MNR and others as appropriate, and may be included in study documentation that is made available for public review. Personal information will remain confidential unless prior consent to disclose is obtained. This information may be used by the Ministry of Natural Resources to seek public input on other resource management surveys and projects. For more information about this project, please contact the above-noted person.



Appendix E: Notice of Opportunity to Inspect the Draft ESR

Proposed Visitor Centre Upgrade – MacGregor Point Provincial Park

Notice of Opportunity to Inspect the Draft Environmental Study Report

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Parks is inviting comments on a Draft Environmental Study Report (ESR) for its proposal to upgrade the Visitor Centre at the MacGregor Point Provincial Park, located west of Highway 21 approximately five kilometers south of Port Elgin. This project will involve the planning and design of a proposed upgraded Visitor Centre within the development zone of the park. The Visitor Centre would feature interpretive exhibits and displays, other educational events related to the natural and cultural resources of the Park and will provide tourism benefits to the park and surrounding communities within the southern Grey-Bruce Tourism Area.

This project is being carried out in accordance with the approved management plan for MacGregor Point Provincial Park. The Draft ESR was prepared in accordance the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves. It describes the process for the selection of a preferred location and alternative, the development of a site plan and an evaluation of environmental effects. The preferred location is the Ash Pond site where the existing Visitor Centre is presently located. The Turtle Pond and Woodland sites are the two alternative locations.

Comments must be received within the comment period, which will expire on **January 23, 2006**.

The Draft ESR can be downloaded from: http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/macg_planning.html

A hardcopy version of the Draft ESR is available for viewing at the MacGregor Point Provincial Park office. To obtain a hardcopy version, to discuss the project, or to be placed on the project mailing list, please contact:

Norah Toth, Natural Heritage Education Specialist
MacGregor Point Provincial Park
R. R. 1, Port Elgin, Ontario N0H 2C5
Phone: 519-389-6231
Fax: 519-389-9057
Email: norah.toth@mnr.gov.on.ca

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to discuss any concerns at this time as it is the intention of MNR to proceed with this project. A Final ESR will be released for public inspection.

Comments and personal information regarding this project are collected under the authority of the Environmental Assessment Act and the Provincial Parks Act or Public Lands Act to assist in making decisions. Comments and opinions which do not constitute personal information as defined by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, will be shared among MNR and others as appropriate, and may be included in study documentation that is made available for public review. Personal information will remain confidential unless prior consent to disclose is obtained. This information may be used by the Ministry of Natural Resources to seek public input on other resource management surveys and projects. For more information about this project, please contact the above-noted person.

Appendix F: Notice of Completion, Opportunity to Inspect the Final ESR

Proposed Visitor Centre Upgrade, MacGregor Point Provincial Park

Notice of Completion, Opportunity to Inspect the Final Environmental Study Report

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Parks invites inspection of the Final Environmental Study Report for its proposal to upgrade the Visitor Centre at MacGregor Point Provincial Park, located west of Highway 21 approximately five kilometres south of Port Elgin. The existing Visitor Centre was built in 1977. It was constructed near Lake Huron between the Algonquin and Nipissing Campgrounds and designed as a three season facility with a combined exhibit space/indoor theatre, staff workspace and limited storage facilities. Since that time the program has expanded and the existing Visitor Centre can no longer support the demands required of a year round park. A Final Environmental Study Report (ESR) for the Visitor Centre has now been completed, as required for a Category C project by *A Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves* (Class EA). The Final ESR describes the process for the selection of a preferred location, the development of a site plan and an evaluation of environmental effects.

To obtain a copy of the Final ESR, to discuss the project, to provide comments or to inspect the project file during normal office hours, please contact:

*Ms. Norah Toth, Natural Heritage Education Specialist
MacGregor Point Provincial Park
R.R. #1, Port Elgin, Ontario N0H 2C5
(Tel.) 519-389-6231, (Fax) 519-389-9057, (E-mail) norah.toth@ontario.ca*

If there are concerns about this project that cannot be resolved in discussion with MNR, interested parties may request the Minister of the Environment to issue a Part II Order requiring an individual environmental assessment under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. For information on what a Part II Order request should contain, consult the Class EA. Requests must be received by the Minister of the Environment within the 45-day comment period, which expires on February 11, 2009, and copied at the same time to MNR at the above address. The address of the Minister of the Environment is: 135 St. Clair Avenue West, 12th Floor, Toronto, ON M4V 1P5.

Interested parties are strongly encouraged to discuss any concerns with MNR before requesting an individual environmental assessment. If no request is received within the 45-day period, or if a request is successfully resolved, MNR may proceed to implement the project without further public notice.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority of Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*. Any personal information you provide (address, name, telephone, etc.) will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, however, your comments will become part of the record of consultation and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may be used by the MNR to send you information about future planning initiatives in the park area. If you have questions about use of your personal information, please contact Tim Marchand, A/Parks Planning Specialist at tel.: 519-873-4618.



Appendix G: Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves - Section 5.2

5.2 Category C Project Evaluation and Consultation Process

Category C projects, described in Section 4.1.3 and Table 4.2, may vary widely in their potential environmental effects and level of public interest. The requirements set out in this Class EA are a minimum.

All information described in the following steps will be placed on a project file, first opened during the screening process (Section 4.2), as part of the public record. The records of any future monitoring required as a result of the evaluation process will also be placed on the project file.

The process consists of seven steps, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Step 1: Scoping

MNR staff review the extent of planning and consultation previously conducted in support of the project (for example, through a land use direction or management planning process). This information is combined with the results of the screening to determine the project evaluation and consultation steps that are remaining and must be completed through this Class EA.

Step 2: Initial Public Notice for Category C Projects

At a minimum, this will consist of a mailing to persons and agencies with a known or, what MNR believes to be, a potential interest, and a local newspaper advertisement, with an invitation to comment within 30 days. The appropriate MOE regional office will receive a mandatory notice. Note that news releases do not satisfy the notice requirements, that is, an advertisement is required. If the provincial park or conservation reserve is operating or otherwise has managed entry, this notice will also be clearly posted at the office and/or normal (or authorized) entry points.

This notice should include the following information:

- A title indicating the project name and location.
- A summary description of the project or alternatives, and any proposed mitigation measures.
- A map or description of the location of the project or alternatives and the study area, if appropriate.
- A summary description of previous MNR planning activities leading to the identification of the project, and a statement that MNR will either:
 - Conduct the complete project evaluation specified for a Category C project under this Class EA, or;
 - Conduct the remaining information gathering, evaluation and consultation required for a Category C project under this Class EA that has not already been conducted under a previous planning process.
- An invitation to provide comments on the proposed project, specifying the deadline (i.e., the last day of the 30-day period), and to participate in the preparation of an ESR.
- An invitation to any additional consultation event(s) associated with the project, giving date, time and location
- The name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of a contact person to whom questions and requests for additional information must be directed, and to whom comments or requests to be added to the mailing list must be sent.
- A statement of the authority under which information is being collected from the public, and of that information's availability and confidentiality under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- The comment period will be at least 30 days, and may be extended for more significant projects or to accommodate a high level of public interest. MNR may also include supplementary information with the notice, which may include:

- More detailed information about the project, the environment affected and existing knowledge about potential effects.
- Proposed criteria for the evaluation of the project and any alternatives.
- A project schedule, including an outline of additional proposed consultation.
- A questionnaire or comment sheet.

Where comments are received, MNR staff should work directly with those affected to try to resolve the concerns as much as possible before deciding whether to pursue other options, which may include:

- Identifying new approaches to meeting the need that the project was intended to resolve.
- A decision not to proceed with the project.
- Voluntary elevation of the project to Category D. This may be considered at the request of an interested party.
- Alternative dispute resolution methods (see Appendix 8.5.3).

Step 3: Project Evaluation and Preparation of a Draft Environmental Study Report (ESR)

MNR staff will carry out the evaluation of the project and any additional consultation. A Draft ESR report will be prepared, based on the project evaluation and the results of consultation. The level of detail of Draft ESRs will vary depending on the complexity of the project, its environmental effects and the level of public and agency concern.

The Draft ESR will include:

- A description of what is to be accomplished by the project (the problem, opportunity or issue), and why.
- Confirmation of the project category.
- Review of the planning already undertaken in support of the project and the matters remaining to be addressed in the project evaluation, based on the relevant approved land use or management direction or other policy document or approvals (per Step 1).
- A description of alternatives to the project and alternative methods of carrying out the project, where relevant, including a systematic comparison of alternatives where appropriate (see Appendix 5).
- A description of the project study area and the environment affected, including existing land uses and valued ecosystem components and special features that could be affected.
- Identification of potential environmental effects of the project and any alternatives, focusing on the potential effects identified in the screening, through consultation and in available resource inventories.
- A description of the project evaluation process conducted, including the rationale for selecting the preferred alternative.
- Details of the proposed project including its location, duration (i.e., one time or recurring), the basic technologies to be used, and the project design. This may include a site plan, where appropriate.
- Applicable MNR policies, procedures, manuals and guidelines (see Appendix 3), other required approvals (see Appendix 7), and their relevance to the project.
- The environmental effects of the project and their significance, including discussion of any benefits that may offset negative effects. Assessing the significance of environmental effects is discussed in Appendix 5.
- Consideration of the implications of not proceeding with the project (the "no-go alternative").
- Commitments to any proposed mitigation, remedial or enhancement measures.
- Consideration of whether monitoring is required, and, if so, commitments to monitoring the project and the future availability of monitoring records (See Section 5.4).

Appendices to the Draft ESR should include:

- Documentation of the screening evaluation.
- A description of the public consultation process, a synopsis of the issues raised, MNR's response to those issues, and any changes made to the project in response to public or agency input.

- Additional summaries or details of the environmental evaluations conducted and their findings (technical materials may be provided in supplementary documents).

Step 4: Notice of Opportunity to Inspect the Draft Environmental Study Report

MNR will individually notify everyone on the present project mailing list, and will send the Draft ESR to the appropriate MOE Regional Office. Where MNR considers that there is a high level of interest or that the project was substantially changed during the process, notice will also be provided in a local newspaper advertisement. The Draft ESR may be sent individually to interested parties and to others who request it.

Depending on the level of public and agency interest and the significance of the project and its potential effects, the MNR manager (the zone manager for a provincial park or the district manager for a conservation reserve) may add other consultation events as discussed in Appendix 8. Normally the deadline for comments will be 30 days, although this may be extended in situations that are known to be more complex. If the level of interest in the project is low, the manager may reduce the deadline to a minimum of 14 days, however this must be stated in the notice.

This notice will include:

- A summary description of the project, alternatives and proposed mitigation, remedial or enhancement measures described in the Draft ESR.
- A map or description of the location of the project.
- An invitation to inspect the Draft ESR at specified public locations.
- A request for comments on the Draft ESR and its findings, specifying the deadline.
- An invitation to any additional consultation events to be held in connection with the project.
- Contact person information, as in the initial notice (Step 2).
- Notice that MNR intends to proceed with the project, and that a Final ESR will be released for public inspection.
- Reiteration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* provisions.

Step 5: Completion of the Final Environmental Study Report

MNR staff will consider agency and public comments in refining the Draft ESR, and in deciding whether to proceed with the project. The required contents of the Final ESR are the same as for the Draft.

Step 6: Notice of Completion, Opportunity to Inspect the Final Environmental Study Report

MNR will send notice to everyone on the present project mailing list, which includes all persons and agencies who commented or asked to be notified of further steps in the planning of the project, and provide notice in a local newspaper advertisement. MNR will make available and may send the Final ESR individually to interested parties and to others who request it. A copy will be sent to the appropriate MOE Regional Office. This notice will include:

- Confirmation that the requirements of the Class EA process for a Category C project have been met, subject to consideration of any request to the Minister of the Environment for an individual EA; that any mitigation or monitoring requirements will be undertaken; and that MNR intends to proceed.
- Description of the project and its location (shown on a map, where appropriate).
- Description of the Part II Order provisions of the *EA Act*, indication of a 30-day period for Part II Order requests or other comments, and the address of the Minister of the Environment to whom requests must be sent.
- The name, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address of a contact person at MNR to whom questions or requests for a more complete project description must be directed, and comments must be sent.
- A location where the final ESR may be viewed.

Where the project is complex or there is a high level of interest, MNR staff may decide to conduct additional consultation or newspaper notices in connection with the Final ESR. If changes to the ESR are required at this stage, the procedure in Section 6.8 will be followed.

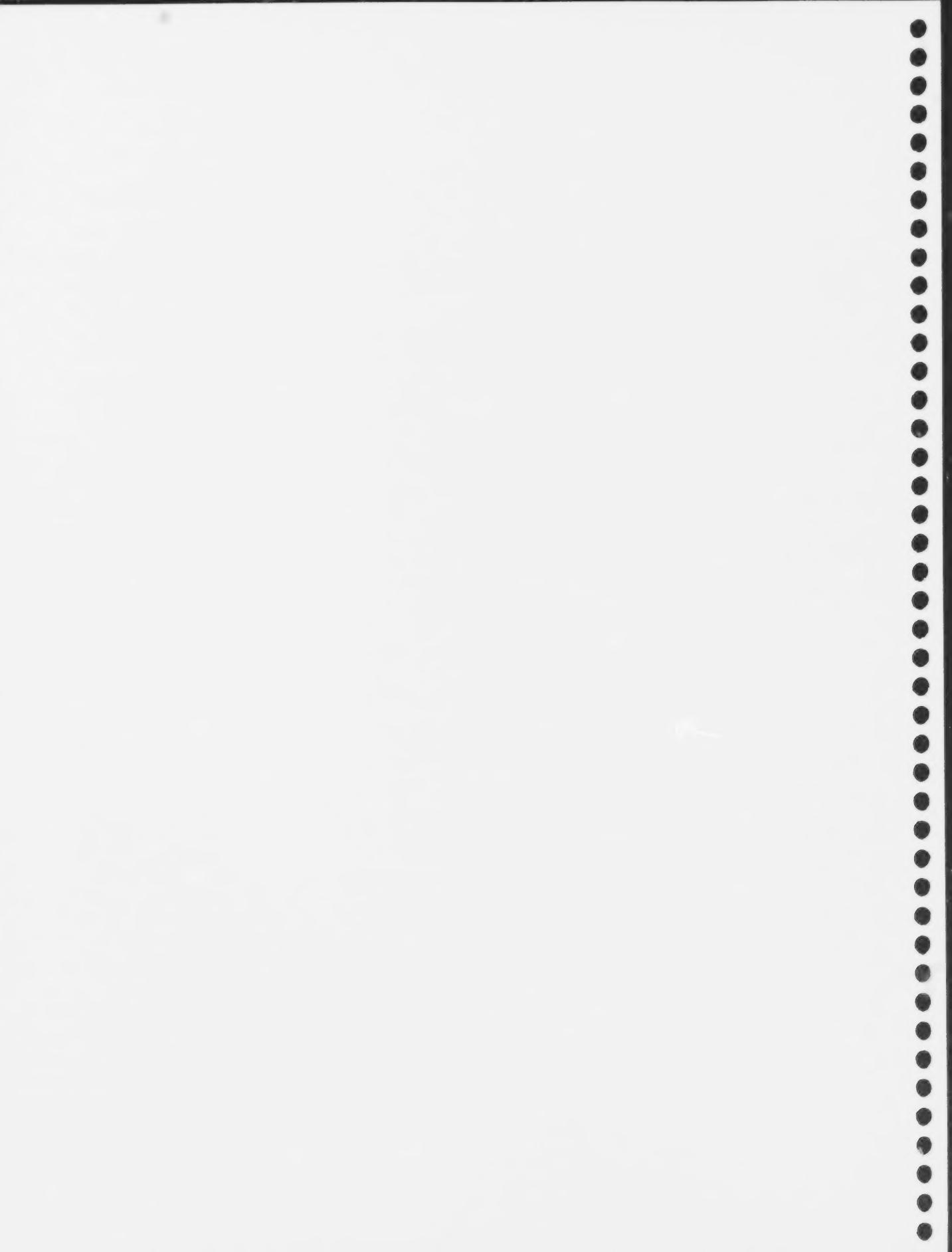
If a Part II Order request is received, the procedure described in Section 6.6 applies. Note that a 7-day waiting period is suggested in Section 6.6.3, to allow for MOE notification of a request.

Step 7: Statement of Completion, Implement Project

If no Part II Order requests are received during the 30-day period, or if a request is resolved without elevation of the project to Category D or a requirement for an individual EA by the Minister of the Environment, the responsible MNR manager (the zone manager for a provincial park, or the district manager for a conservation reserve) will prepare a "Statement of Completion" and the project may proceed within a period of five years (after this time, the provisions of Section 6.7 apply). The Statement of Completion will be placed on the project file and will also be sent to the Manager, Planning and Research Section of Ontario Parks and MOE's Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch. It will include:

- A brief description of the nature and location of the project.
- Confirmation that the project was evaluated as a Category C project in accordance with the requirements of this Class EA.
- Confirmation that no Part II Order requests were received during the notification period, that any Part II Order requests received were withdrawn, or that any requests were denied by the Minister of the Environment (see Section 6.6).
- The signature of the responsible MNR manager, and the date.

All activities associated with the implementation of a project will usually include recommended mitigation measures outlined in the Final ESR. If construction and maintenance is to be contracted out, an agreement will be signed with the contractor that contains provisions requiring that the mitigation measures identified in the ESR be carried out.



Appendix H: Life Science Evaluation of Three Alternative Locations for Visitor Centre Expansion/Reconstruction at MacGregor Point Provincial Park - Jarmo Jalava 2004

**LIFE SCIENCE EVALUATION
OF
THREE ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS
FOR
VISITOR CENTRE
EXPANSION / RECONSTRUCTION
AT
MacGREGOR POINT PROVINCIAL PARK**

2004

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NOH 1W0

For:

**MacGregor Point Provincial Park
Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Norah Toth and Chris Tomsett are thanked for providing the background information for the present study. Staff at Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone provided the mapping and air photos.

I. INTRODUCTION

I.i. Purpose of the Present Study

The terms of reference of the present study stated the following:

"As a support document to the Environmental Study Report, [Ontario Parks] would like to verify the work of Joe Johnson (A Reconnaissance Survey and Evaluation of Life Science Resources of MacGregor Point Provincial Park and Adjacent Lands, 1999) and put it into direct context with the three proposed Development Zone locations for a Visitor Centre."

The terms of reference also indicated that the three proposed areas for Visitor Centre expansion / reconstruction were identified on a map provided to the author. However, the map provided shows only two distinct areas highlighted in yellow: 1. an area immediately surrounding the existing Visitor Centre; and 2. a larger area extending from the intersection near the Recycling Facility northwest past the Park Store to the southeast edge of the Nipissing Campground. Upon meeting with MacGregor Point Provincial Park staff on the day the evaluation fieldwork took place, the proposed locations were identified to the author as being:

Location 1. An area immediately surrounding the existing Visitor Centre (Toth pers. comm. 2004)

Location 2. An area to the northeast and north of the Park Store (Toth pers. comm. 2004)

Location 3. An area surrounding the parking lot to the southeast of the Nipissing Campground (Tomsett pers. comm. 2004)

The following evaluation is made on the basis of the information provided by Park Staff (Toth pers. comm. 2004; Tomsett pers. comm. 2004) on the day of the site inspection, which agrees with the mapping provided, but divides the larger of the two areas on the original map into locations 2 and 3.

I.ii. Description of the Study Area Based on Johnson (1999)

Mapping and the written description in Johnson (1999) place all three locations under consideration for visitor centre expansion / reconstruction in the "woodland complex (excluding upland deciduous forest)" vegetation community. Johnson (1999) maps Location 1 and Location 2 as occurring in the "most biologically significant general area." Of particular importance when considering the proposed Visitor Centre Expansion / Reconstruction are the distinctions between upland forest, sand dune and wetland ecosites, which have not been distinguished in the mapping provided by Johnson (1999). Of these ecosites, non-dune and non-shoreline upland habitats would best be able to withstand development.

The Johnson (1999) description of the woodland complex is provided here verbatim in order to facilitate a detailed verification and to provide a direct context for evaluation of the three proposed locations for Visitor Centre Expansion / Reconstruction. Johnson (1999) describes the woodland complex as follows.

Physical Description

The complex involves most of the study area. With more field study it probably could be mapped and described as four to six communities, often interdigitating in a complicated pattern and for

the most part not discernible from aerial photographs. The majority of the area is swamp land (or less wet lowlands). Except above the Nipissing Bluff...low upland ridges (including low sand dunes) running parallel to the Lake Huron shoreline are frequent. Other low undulations are frequent as well, particularly towards the shoreline. Portions of the Nipissing Bluff are involved too. A few Beaver and other floods are present, as well as a previously flooded very open area. These flood and bluff areas comprise only a small portion of the total area.

The soil is loam (mostly silty or (more often) sandy, sometimes sandy organic) or muck, occasionally sand or gravel. Stones are frequent inland, below the Nipissing Bluff. The moisture regime is very variable, from dry to saturated or open water, averaging on the dry side of wet-mesic.

Vegetation

The complex is very heterogeneous (variable). In general, the forest is mixed (with the coniferous element often predominating close to Lake Huron) to deciduous. The deciduous element clearly predominates overall. The forest tends to be middle-aged, varying in age from young to semi-mature. The canopy varies from closed to very open to (occasionally) non-existent, averaging slightly on the closed side of "open".

Red/green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) is the overall dominant. Overall subdominants include white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) (often dominant close to Lake Huron), white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), and quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*). Balsam poplar (*Populus balsamifera*) and balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) are frequent associates. Some of the large number of associations that were seen are: pure red/green ash (the most common one), pure white cedar, pure quaking aspen, white cedar – black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), white cedar – balsam fir – white birch – quaking aspen, young white cedar – balsam fir – white birch, quaking aspen – white cedar – white birch, red/green ash – tamarack (*Larix laricina*), red/green ash – quaking aspen, silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) – red/green ash, red/green ash – soft maple (= silver and/or red maple (*Acer rubrum*)), red/green ash – quaking aspen – white birch., white birch – quaking aspen – large-toothed aspen (*Populus grandidentata*), and white cedar – white birch – red pine (*Pinus resinosa*).

The dominants in the shrub-sapling layer are red/green ash, *Cornus amomum* (silky dogwood), and *C. stolonifera* (red-osier dogwood). Many other shrub and tree-sapling species are common to abundant locally.

Plants that are common in the ground cover overall include *Rubus pubescens* (dwarf raspberry), *Phalaris arundinacea* (reed canary grass), *Carex* as a genus (sedges), *Boehmeria cylindrica* (false nettle), *Rhus radicans* (poison ivy), *Aralia nudicaulis* (wild sarsaparilla), *Symphyotrichum lateriflorum* (calico aster), and *Equisetum arvense* (field horsetail).

Six provincially rare plants were seen in community 1 – *Calamovilfa longifolia* var. *magna* (sand reed grass), *Eleocharis rostellata* (beaked spike-rush), *Iris lacustris* (dwarf lake iris), *Cypripedium arietinum* (ram's-head lady's slipper), *Astragalus neglectus* (Cooper's milk vetch), and *Lithospermum caroliniense* (hairy puccoon). The last three are also rare in southern Bruce County. Nineteen other native species rare in Bruce County are known to the surveyor to have been found. These are *Phragmites australis* (common reed), *Glyceria grandis* (tall manna grass), *Spartina pectinata* (prairie cord grass), *Andropogon gerardii* (big bluestem), five sedges (*Carex sterilis*, *C. garberi*, *C. vaginata*, *C. prasina*, and *C. pallescens*), *Scirpus cespitosus*

(tufted clubrush), *Ranunculus pensylvanicus* (bristly buttercup), *Arabis drummondii* (Drummond's rock cress), *Sorbus decora* (showy mountain ash), *Dalibarda repens* (dewdrop), *Vaccinium angustifolium* (low sweet blueberry)...*Epigaea repens* (trailing arbutus)...*Cynoglossum boreale* (northern wild comfrey), *Veronica americana* (American brooklime), and *Solidago juncea* (early goldenrod). Very likely several other native species rare in southern Bruce County have been seen here, but I do not know specifically, largely because in the case of most south Bruce rare species seen only by other persons, I do not know the community (ies) of occurrence.

Four-toed Salamander, rare in Bruce County, has been found here more than once. Spotted Turtle, provincially significant and rare in southern Bruce County, has also been seen here. This is the habitat where an Eastern Fox Snake (provincially significant and rare in Bruce County) was found.

At least one provincially significant breeding bird has been recorded here with breeding evidence – Black-crowned Night-Heron.

II. FIELD AND EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Pre-field Investigations

Prior to fieldwork, existing literature and databases with information relating to MacGregor Point Provincial Park and other natural heritage areas and features in the region were compiled. Key information sources included Johnson (1999), Atkinson and Huizer (1993) and NHIC (2004).

Recent colour infra-red air photos and 1:10,000 scale Ontario Basic Mapping (OBM) were obtained from Ontario Parks. 1:50,000 scale National Topographic Series (NTS) mapping for the area was also obtained. The air photos were interpreted, and OBM maps were consulted to identify areas of potentially high ecological significance and to ensure that landform-vegetation features were sampled as comprehensively as possible.

Field Investigations

Fieldwork was undertaken on September 1, 2004 (Table 1).

Table 1. Fieldwork of the present study.

Date	Time / Observer	Focus of Inventory	Species Observations	Community Observations
September 1, 2004	11:30-17:30 / Jalava	Vegetation communities, vascular plants, incidental fauna (birds, mammals, herpetofauna); site conditions; evaluation of potential impacts on life science features	254	19

The timing of the field visits permitted adequate surveys of most species of flora at the site. However, fieldwork took place too late in the season (September 1) to fully document spring ephemeral flowering plants and sedges, mammals, herpetofauna and breeding bird species. Nevertheless, it is believed that this study provides a reasonably thorough documentation of the biological diversity of the locations in question, particularly the vegetation communities and vascular plants. There is no doubt that more mammal, reptile and invertebrate species are found in the area than have been documented by this or previous studies. Mammals (particularly small mammals) require special survey techniques, which were not part of the terms of reference of this study. Reptiles and amphibians tend to be most conspicuous soon after they emerge from hibernation and were undoubtedly not fully documented because of the timing of the inventory work. Invertebrate surveys also require specialised expertise and methods.

Vegetation Surveys

Transects were walked to document each vegetation community type (*i.e.*, habitat) evident from air photo interpretation. A Global Positioning System (GPS) unit was used to determine the UTM grid reference of the community. Normally, the grid reference was taken near the centre of the community, but often more than one GPS reading was taken, particularly at larger community patches. Additional readings were also taken at transition zones or boundaries of the community patches. The accuracy of the GPS unit was typically in the 6 to 20m range, and a standard NHIC accuracy code of "2", meaning 'accurate to within 100m' was assigned to all GPS vegetation community location data.

A standard data spreadsheet originally designed by NHIC and enhanced slightly for project purposes was used as the guide to community data collection. Community structure was described with separate fields for tree, sapling, tall shrub, low shrub, herbaceous and non-vascular plant layers. Percent cover of each physiognomic layer, and of each dominant species within each layer, was recorded. Percent cover of non-vascular plants, exposed rock and open water was also noted, where appropriate. Notes on the landscape context of each community were made, with commentary on adjacent communities, mosaic features, estimated patch size and estimated extent of the community type within the site. Successional dynamics, including stand age and seral stage, and natural and anthropogenic disturbance factors were recorded. Notes were taken on the landform type, topographic position, geology, soil description and type, as well as moisture regime, drainage and hydrological influences of a community. The presence of rare flora and fauna and other special features was also noted for each community sampled. Digital photographs were taken of characteristic vegetation communities, habitats, disturbance impacts, and other interesting natural heritage features.

After fieldwork, each sampled community was assigned standard ecosite and vegetation type codes, based on the Southern Ontario Ecological Land Classification (ELC) type name and ELC code (Lee *et al.* 1998).

It is important to note that not all vegetation community patches were subject to field documentation and georeferencing, and that vegetation evaluation was based on a composite of the following:

1. Community centroids georeferenced with a GPS unit;
2. Community boundaries georeferenced in the field with a GPS unit;
3. Recent 1:10,000 scale colour infra-red air photos;

4. Ontario Basic Mapping (OBMs);
5. Vegetation mapping by Johnson (1999);
6. Wetland mapping by Atkinson and Huizer (1993).

Vegetation classification was complicated by the fact that, as noted by Johnson (1999), the vegetation complex in the study area is “very heterogeneous,” varying in composition from patches of deciduous and mixed forests to deciduous and mixed swamp, and in age from young to semi-mature.

Botanical Surveys

Botanical surveys were conducted concurrently with vegetation community sampling. Plant species lists were usually compiled for each vegetation community sampled. Plant records are thus generally georeferenced (using GPS) to the community patch in which they were observed. Sight records of rare or otherwise interesting species and features were more precisely georeferenced. Voucher specimens of difficult to identify taxonomic groups (such as Poaceae and Cyperaceae) were collected, as were specimens of locally and provincially rare species as long as the site population was considered large enough to withstand the removal of a specimen. Where populations appeared too small to make a collection, digital photographs of the plant were taken.

All reasonable quality voucher specimens will be appropriately labeled and deposited in a publicly accessible herbarium such as the TRT at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Faunal Surveys

As noted above, the timing of the project prohibited surveying for breeding birds and emerging herpetofauna in spring, when they are most conspicuous. Faunal observations were made opportunistically during botanical and breeding bird surveys. All faunal observations were georeferenced and associated with specific habitat or vegetation community types. More detailed notes, such as number of individuals, sex and age are routinely taken for NHIC-tracked or otherwise significant fauna and the data are provided to OMNR for inclusion in the provincial repository.

II. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

II.i. Results of the Present Study and Verification of Johnson (1999)

The site inspection of the present study generally confirms the written description and mapping of Johnson (1999), and none of the information provided by Johnson (1999) is disputed. However, it should be noted, as Johnson (1999) states, that the "woodland complex" moniker broadly describes a highly variable mosaic of wetland and moist upland communities with a broad range of dominant tree-associations, extents of canopy-closure, stand ages, and levels of soil moisture. A detailed inventory of the area using the methods of the standard classification for southern Ontario (Lee *et al.* 1998) would undoubtedly document numerous Ecological Land Classification (ELC) vegetation types. Johnson indicates that "with more field study [the complex] probably could be mapped and described as four to six communities". Results of the present study indicate that the number of ELC community types in the complex exceeds that number. However, Johnson (1999) is quite correct that mapping at such a level of detail would be time-consuming and difficult, since many community boundaries in the mosaic are not clearly definable using existing aerial photography.

The ecological characteristics of each of the three proposed Visitor Centre Expansion / Reconstruction Locations are discussed in detail below, based on the results of this study. Comments are made on the veracity of Johnson (1999) descriptions and mapping in relation to each specific Location.

Location 1. Area Immediately Surrounding the Existing Visitor Centre

Findings of the Present Study

The area to the **east and southeast of the existing Visitor Centre** consists of an open walkway leading from the Visitor Centre parking lot to the Visitor Centre itself. East of the walkway, on slightly-undulating, dry-fresh sandy loam soil with high pebble content, is a fairly dense, intermediate-aged, White Cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) stand, with Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*) as a secondary dominant. The tree canopy closure is approximately 80%, and White Cedar saplings form an additional ~15% cover. There are occasional small openings, where White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*) saplings occur. Under the tree canopy there is generally little or no shrub or herbaceous cover, but where canopy gaps (caused by windthrow) allow solar radiation to permeate, Bristle-leaf Sedge (*Carex eburnea*) is often abundant, and Fringed Polygala (*Polygala paucifolia*) and Wild Sarsaparilla (*Aralia nudicaulis*) are not uncommon. The only fauna noted were Tetraploid Gray Treefrog and Black-capped Chickadee. Overall, this community is largely undisturbed except for the edge effects caused by the trails that bisect and border it, and a few observed items of litter. No provincially or locally significant flora or fauna were observed in this area.

Figure 1. White Cedar forest with Red Pine in vicinity of existing Visitor Centre.



To the north of the White Cedar stand is the park amphitheatre, and **north of the amphitheatre** is the significant and ecologically sensitive dune and open shoreline complex. A brief inspection during the present study found species composition on the dune-shoreline system to be consistent with the Johnson (1999) description of "open shoreline complex". It was the author's understanding that Visitor Centre development is not proposed in this area.

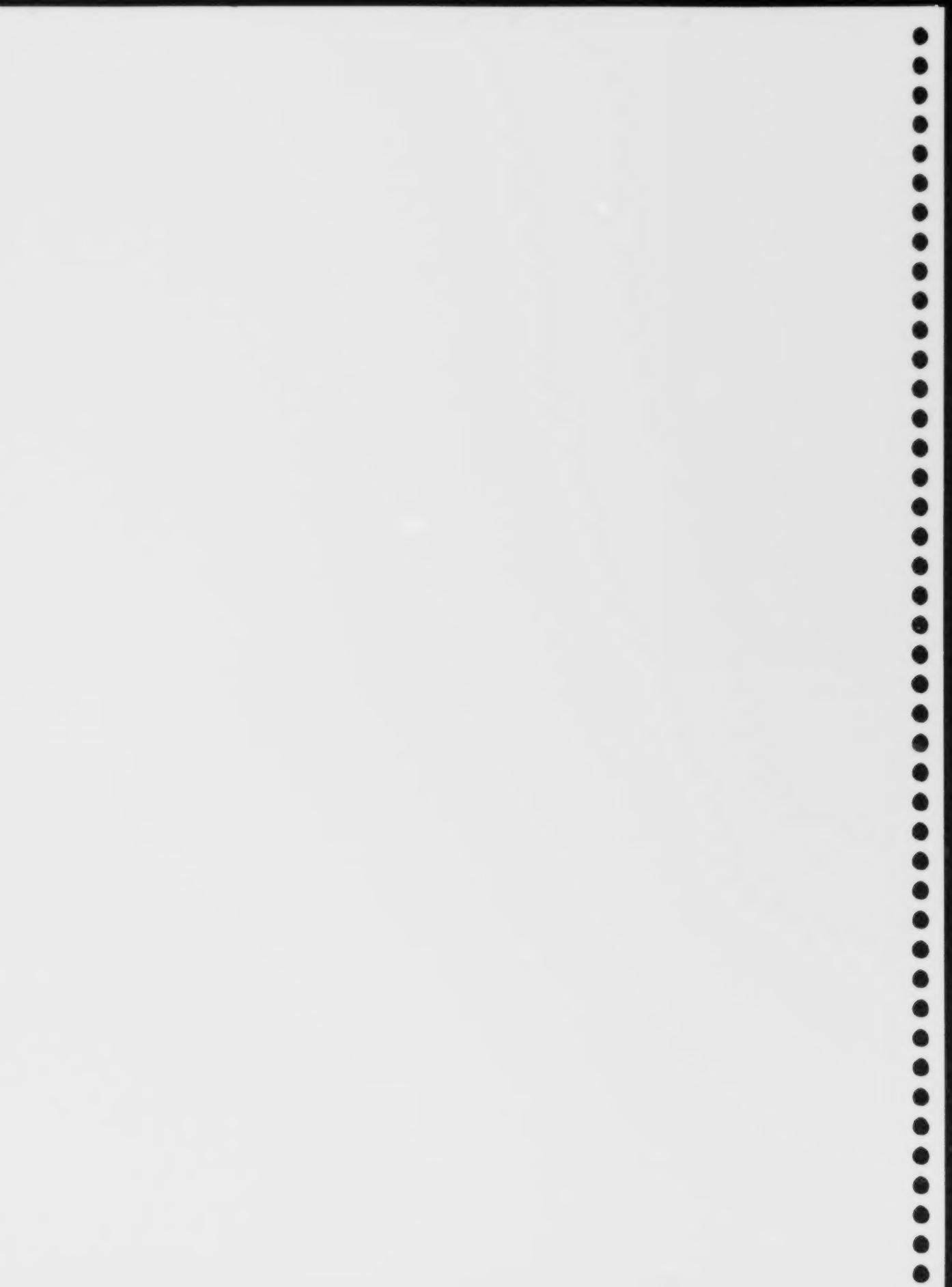


Figure 2. Ecologically sensitive backdune shrubland north of Visitor Centre.



Immediately south of the existing Visitor Centre are disturbed areas consisting of a trail wide enough for vehicle use and a section of the Huron Fringe Trail. On the south side of the Visitor Centre there is a small stand of trees and saplings on dry-fresh sandy soil. The stand is dominated by Trembling Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*), White Birch (*Betula papyrifera*), White Cedar and White Ash. The understorey is variable, being very sparse in shade, to quite dense along the edges, and is dominated by Bristle-leaf Sedge, Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans* ssp. *rydbergii*), Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Wild Sarsaparilla and Fringed Polygala. A number of weedy exotic species are present in this community because of the disturbance levels and the very high edge to interior ratio. To the south, between the trail/driveway to the Visitor Centre and the Huron Fringe trail, is a degraded, open, young stand of trees that is intermediate in species composition between the White Cedar stand and the Trembling Aspen – Balsam Fir stand described above. No provincially or locally significant taxa were observed in this area.

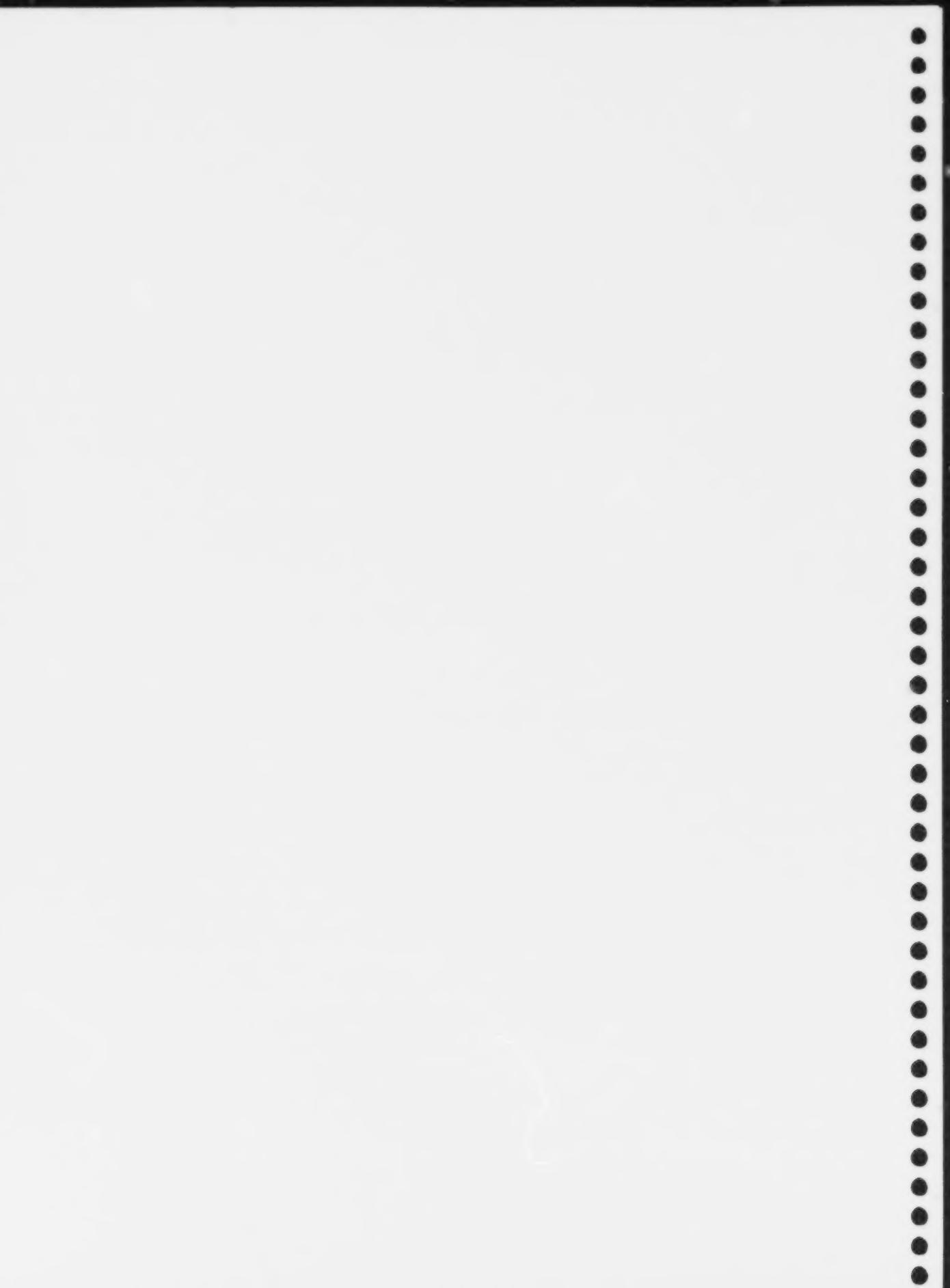
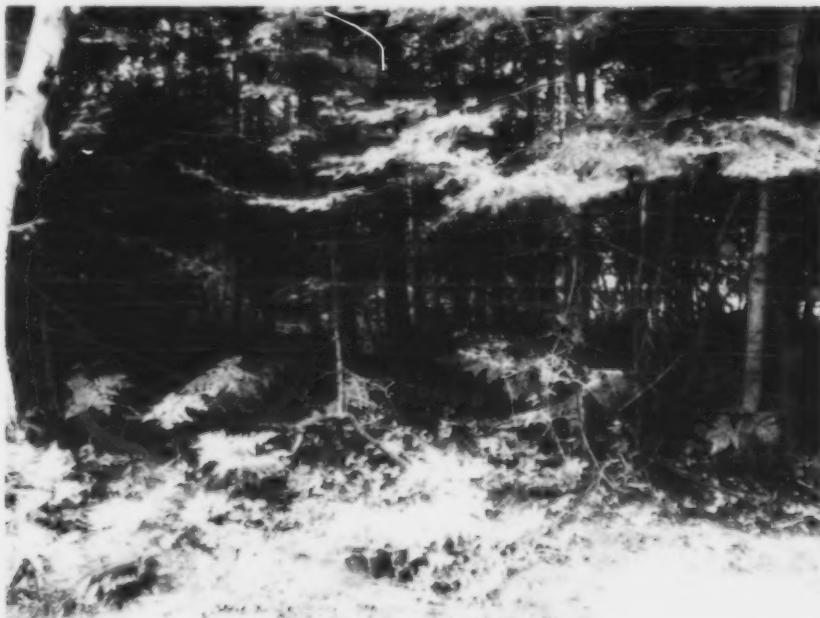


Figure 3. Disturbed mixed forest patch just south of Visitor Centre.

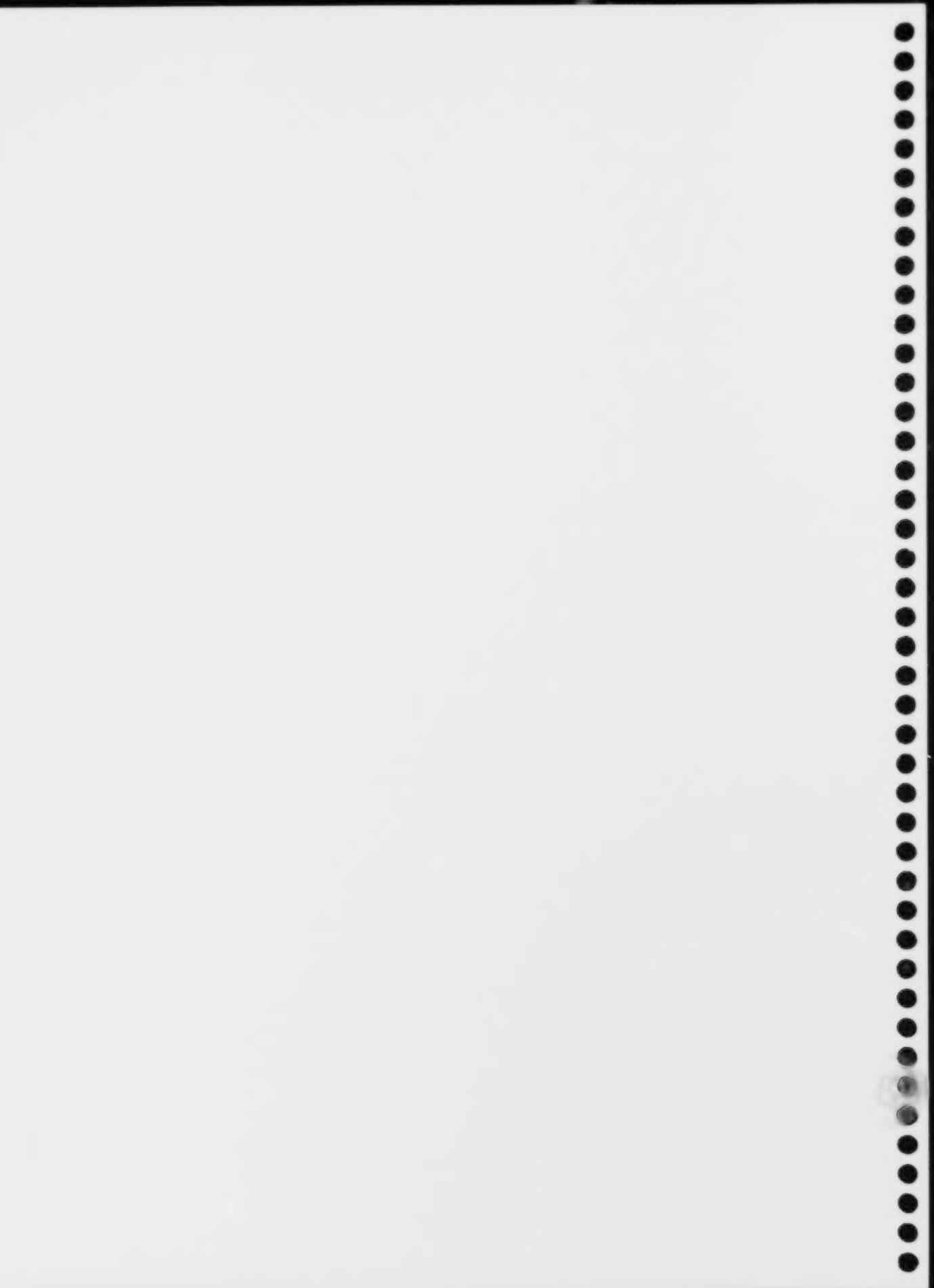


Immediately west of the existing Visitor Centre is a young backdune woodland with an open canopy on fresh to dry-fresh sandy soil. It is dominated by White Cedar and Trembling Aspen trees and saplings, with scattered Red Pine. There is no shrub layer, but the herbaceous layer is quite extensive and dominated primarily by Bristle-leaf Sedge, with Bracken Fern a secondary species, and with Poison Ivy, Wild Basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*) and Fringed Polygala as associated species. With the exception of disturbance in the vicinity of the cleared area of the Visitor Centre and a maintenance shed, this area appears to be in good ecological condition. A population of approximately 300 shoots of the globally and provincially rare Dwarf Lake Iris (G3S3) was found in this community, not far from the cleared area of the Visitor Centre.

Comparison with Johnson (1999)

The findings of the present study are largely consistent with the descriptions and mapping in Johnson (1999). However, the level of resolution of the present study is much finer, and therefore more appropriate for use in determining an ecologically appropriate location for Visitor Centre Expansion / Reconstruction. Key points in this regard relate to the condition of the above-described communities, as well as the presence of special features (i.e., provincially or locally significant natural heritage features).

Specifically, the White Cedar stand east of the Visitor Centre and south of the amphitheatre is relatively undisturbed and intermediate aged, and the impacts of Visitor Centre expansion or reconstruction into this area would include a net loss of moderately good quality (albeit relatively low diversity) habitat within the park. Development to the west of the Visitor Centre would impact on a population of a provincially rare species (currently recommended for designation as Threatened by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (Hartley pers. comm. 2004) and could have a negative effect on the fragile dune-shoreline complex immediately adjacent to it.



Expansion of the Visitor Centre immediately to the south of the existing building would appear to have only a very minor ecological impact, since this area is already significantly disturbed by past clearing, trail use and vehicular access. It is also an upland area buffered by woodland from wetlands in the general vicinity.

Location 2. Area Northeast and North of the Park Store

Findings of the Present Study

The area to the northeast and north of the Park Store consists of a variable mosaic of mixed and deciduous swamp forest and patches of slightly drier (but still moist) mixed upland forest. Overall, the area is 80-90% wetland, primarily open-canopy mixed and deciduous swamp. Very little recent human disturbance was noted except near the walking trail and Park Store at its southern edge and the park road at its northern edge. Of note in this area are mature Red Ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *pennsylvanica*) trees (Figure 4), and massive charred White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) stumps indicating that a forest fire swept through this area many decades ago (Figure 5).

The main vegetation community associations observed during in Location 2 were:

1. Moist to very moist White Cedar – White Birch (Red Ash) mixed forest (Figure 6). This open community has scattered Mountain Maple (*Acer spicatum*) tall shrubs and a diverse, variable understorey dominated by combinations of Wild Sarsaparilla, Fowl Manna Grass (*Glyceria striata*), Calico Aster (*Symphyotrichum lateriflorum*) and Poison Ivy (*Rhus rydbergii*). This woodland verges on swamp, and has areas where water pools in spring and after rains.
2. Fresh White Cedar – White Birch mixed forest (Figure 7). The heavy shade of this dense canopy tree association inhibits the growth of an herbaceous understorey, with Wild Sarsaparilla and ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) seedlings forming only 5% ground cover.



Figure 4. Mature Red Ash trees at Location 2, with author's binder for scale.

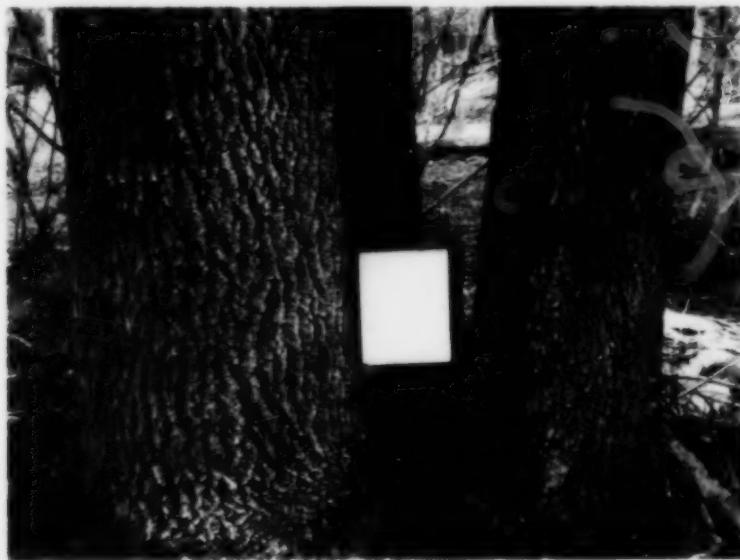


Figure 5. Charred White Pine stumps indicating historic forest fire at Location 2.



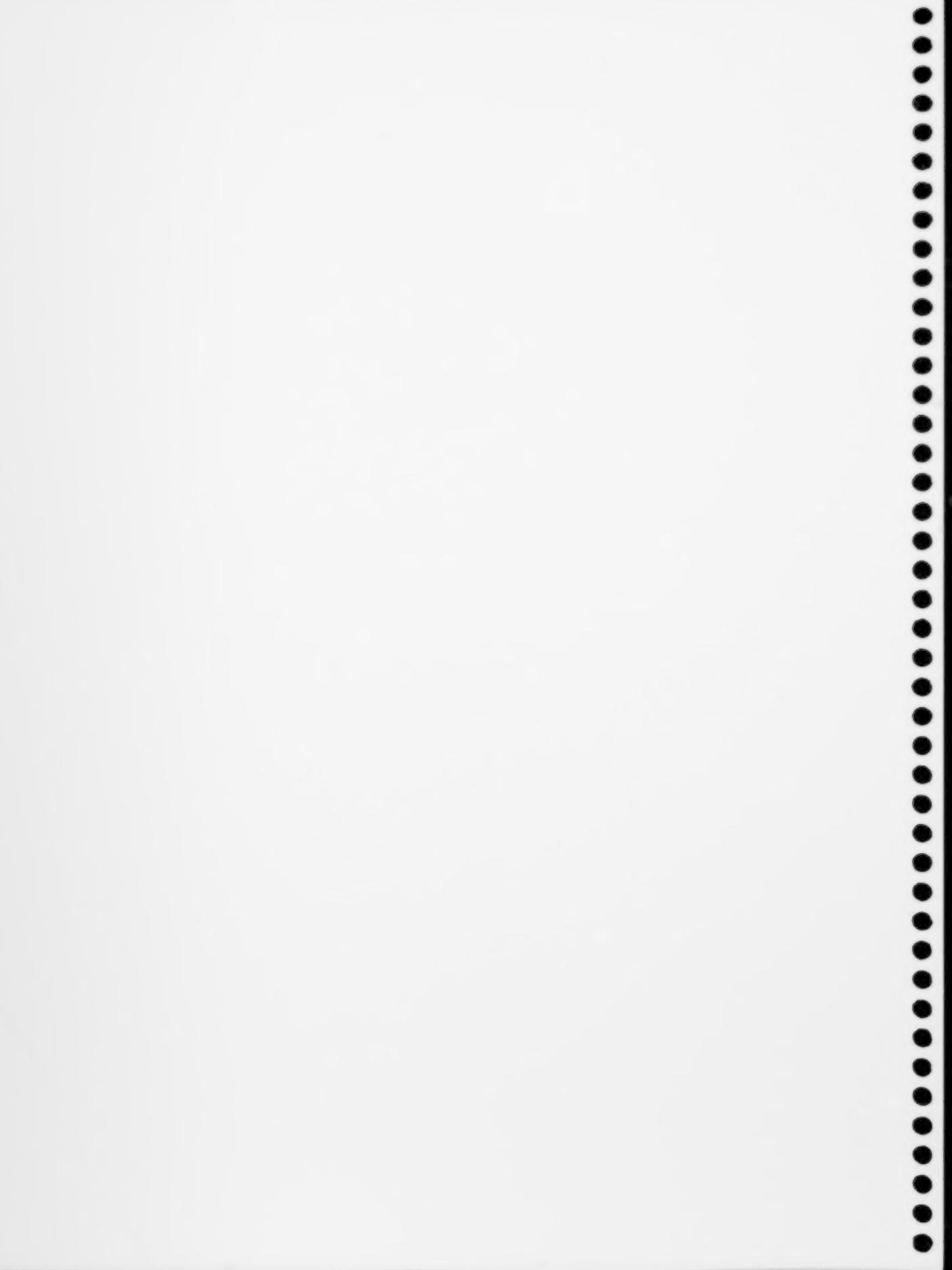
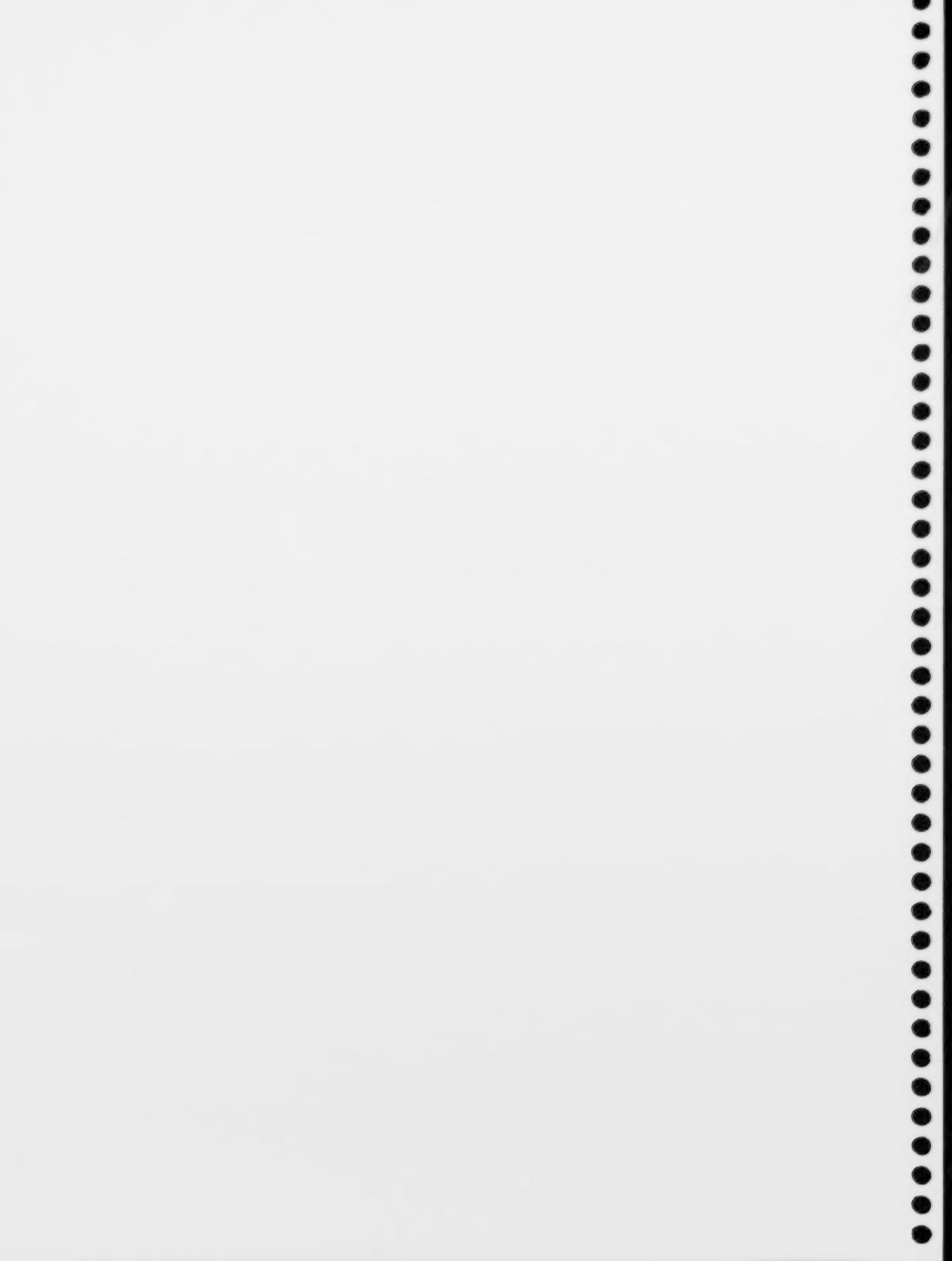


Figure 6. Moist to very moist White Cedar – White Birch (Red Ash) mixed forest.



Figure 7. White Cedar – White Birch mixed forest with sparse understorey.



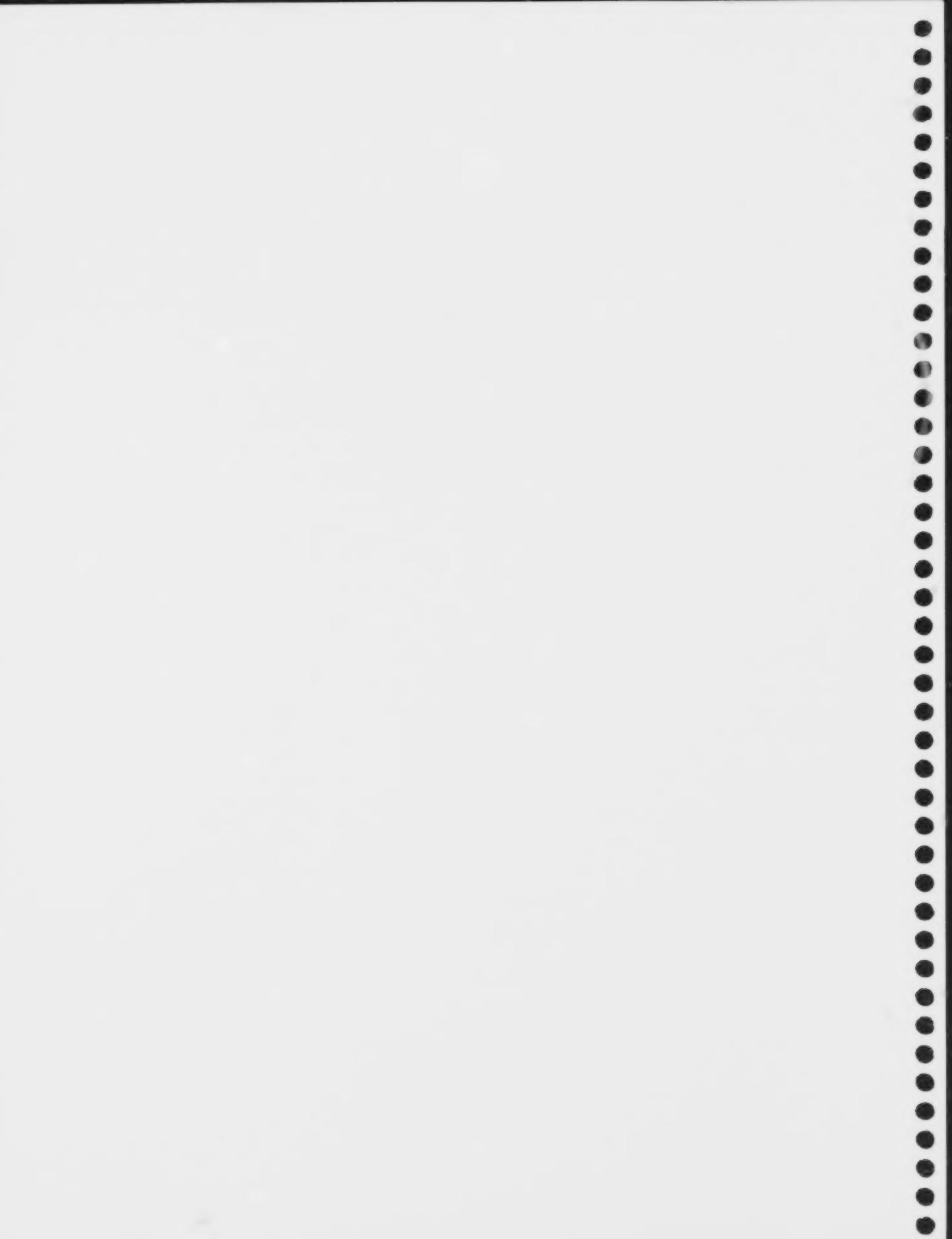


3. Open Red Ash - Black Ash (*Fraxinus nigra*) (White Cedar, White Birch) deciduous swamp (Figure 8). This open-canopy swamp has a rich understorey dominated by Fowl Manna Grass, Dwarf Raspberry (*Rubus pubescens*), Giant Goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*), Calico Aster, American Wild Mint (*Mentha arvensis*), Spotted Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*) and Sensitive Fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*). The wettest sections have a sparse low shrub layer of Red-osier Dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*) with the herb layer being strongly dominated by Sensitive Fern. The community is intermediate-aged with the only recent disturbance noted being occasional natural windthrow (fallen trees).

Figure 8. Open Red Ash - Black Ash deciduous swamp with rich understorey.



4. Open Swamp Maple (*Acer X freemanii*) – Balsam Fir (*Abies balsamea*) – White Birch deciduous swamp. Small patches of swamp dominated by Hybrid (Swamp) Maple with an understorey of Wild Sarsaparilla and Fringed Polygala occur in the southern part of Location 2.



5. Open Swamp Maple – Red Ash – Black Ash deciduous swamp. This treed swamp association, also found in the southern part of Location 2, has a fairly extensive shrub layer dominated by Silky Dogwood (*Cornus amomum*) – Red Ash seedlings – Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) and Red-osier Dogwood, and a diverse herbaceous layer that commonly includes Marsh Fern (*Thelypteris palustris*), Northern Bugleweed (*Lycopus uniflorus*) and ash seedlings as dominants.

Comparison with Johnson (1999)

The findings of the present study are largely consistent with the descriptions and mapping in Johnson (1999) that apply to Location 2. However, the level of resolution of the present study is much finer, and therefore more appropriate for use in determining the impact of Visitor Centre construction in this area on natural heritage features and ecological processes. Key points in this regard relate to the generally excellent ecological condition of the above-described communities and whether provincially significant features are present. This area is mostly wetland, and it is part of the Provincially Significant MacGregor Point Wetland complex (Atkinson and Huizer 1993, Toth pers. comm. 2004).

Overall, the area northeast and north of the Park Store displays relatively high diversity both in terms of vegetation associations and species. Fauna observed included Northern Leopard Frog, Tetraploid Gray Treefrog, Spring Peeper and Wood Frog, attesting to the area's substantial wetland component. Pileated Woodpecker, a species associated with larger tracts of forest (Larson *et al.* 1999), was also present. No provincially significant species were noted; however, the general absence of recent human disturbance, the maturity of some of the trees, and the interpretive value of the old, charred White Pine stumps are all factors contributing to the natural heritage importance of this area to the park as a whole.

Considering its relatively high ecological diversity, its good ecological condition, and the fact that it is part of a provincially significant wetland, it is recommended that construction of a new visitor centre not be further considered for Location 2.

Location 3. Area Surrounding Parking Lot Southeast of the Nipissing Campground

Findings of the Present Study

Two major woodland associations were documented at Location 3, the area surrounding the parking lot southeast of the Nipissing Campground. These communities have been fragmented considerably by the parking lot, as well as by the trails that flare out from the parking lot area (*i.e.*, a boardwalk to the beach, the Huron Fringe trail). However, the interior of these communities showed little sign of recent human disturbance.

On the beach (north) side of the parking lot is an open-canopy woodland on dry-fresh very sandy loam soil dominated by White Birch, Trembling Aspen and White Ash, with Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) a secondary species. There are scattered Balsam Fir saplings and an extensive tall shrub layer of Round-leaved Dogwood (*Cornus rugosa*). Low shrubs include Bush-honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*) and Glaucous Honeysuckle (*Lonicera dioica*), while the extensive herb layer is dominated by Large-leaved Aster (*Eurybia macrophylla*), Wild Sarsaparilla, Bracken Fern, Partridgeberry (*Mitchella repens*) and Poison Ivy.

To the east and south of the parking lot is a treed swamp that is continuous with the swamp forests described for Location 2, above. In the area of Location 3, the swamp is dominated mainly by tall Red Ash trees, with Trembling Aspen a secondary dominant and Red Maple, White Birch and White Cedar as associated tree species (Figure 9). Black Ash and Balsam Fir are additional species in the sapling layer. Tall shrubs are frequent, consisting primarily of Silky Dogwood and Winterberry. The herbaceous layer is dominated by Naked Mitrewort (*Mitella nuda*), Northern Bugleweed, Dwarf Raspberry, Sensitive Fern and Red Ash seedlings. Towards the northwest, this community grades into a mixed forest and swamp mosaic dominated by White Cedar, White Birch and Red Ash, analogous to community #1 described for Location 2, above.

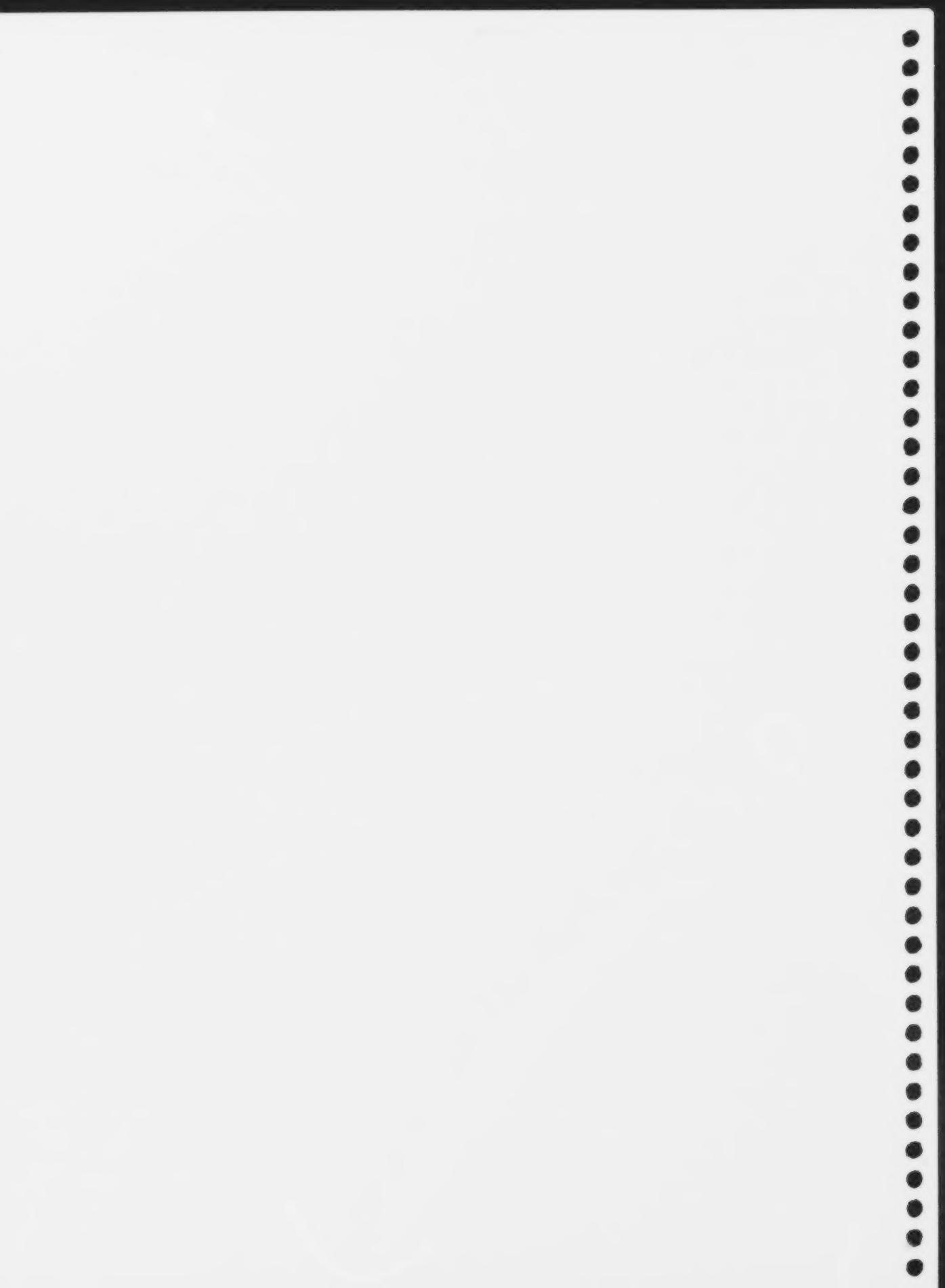
Comparison with Johnson (1999)

As with the two previous locations, the findings of the present study for Location 3 are largely consistent with the descriptions and mapping in Johnson (1999). However, the finer level of resolution of the present study is more appropriate for use in determining the impact Visitor Centre construction would have on natural heritage features and ecological processes. Like Location 2, this area is mostly wetland and is part of the Provincially Significant MacGregor Point Wetland complex (Atkinson and Huizer 1993, Toth pers. comm. 2004).

Development on the beach side of the parking lot at Location 3 would impact on hydrological process, and might also affect natural dune and beach-building processes. Development on the east and south sides of the parking lot at Location 3 would also have hydrological impacts on the provincially significant wetland. It is therefore recommended that development of a new visitor centre not be further considered for Location 3.

Figure 9. Intermediate-aged Red Ash swamp southeast of the Nipissing Campground (Location 3).





III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MacGregor Point Provincial Park contains a major portion of the Provincially Significant MacGregor Point Wetland, not mapped by Johnson (1999). Most of proposed Location 2 and Location 3 are composed of deciduous and mixed swamp communities that are part of this wetland complex (Atkinson and Huizer 1993, Toth pers. comm. 2004). The swamp forests in Location 2 and Location 3 are generally in good ecological condition, have some relatively mature stands of trees, and display moderately high ecological diversity. Visitor Centre reconstruction in these locations would have hydrological impacts and would potentially degrade the ecological integrity of the park's wetland ecosystems.

Based on the findings of the present study of the three proposed locations, the most ecologically-appropriate option for Visitor Centre expansion or reconstruction would be **the area immediately to the south (and possibly southwest) of the existing park Visitor Centre** (part of Location 1). This area is already disturbed by a wide trail, the forest patches are fragmented and disturbed by edge-effects, it is an upland area, and no provincially or locally significant life science features are documented. The infrastructure and facilities (such as trail and driveway access, parking, electricity, plumbing, sewage) of the existing Visitor Centre are already in place, and could probably be enhanced, if needed, with less environmental impact than would be involved in constructing an entirely new facility at another location in the park.

Visitor Centre expansion in Location 1, however, should be set back by an appropriate buffer from the fen-pond complex noted by Johnson (1999) to the southwest, which is part of the Provincially Significant MacGregor Point Wetland complex (Atkinson and Huizer 1993).

It should also be recognized that "Significant and Physical Features Mapping" (Map #2) in Johnson (1999) highlights the open shoreline complex (including areas of sand dunes) and adjacent lands as part of "the most biologically significant general area". This includes the area to the east of the existing Visitor Centre, where building expansion would impact directly on the population of the globally and provincially rare Dwarf Lake Iris.

Any expansion to the north of the existing Visitor Centre towards Lake Huron (not specifically proposed) would potentially impact on the shoreline and dune complex. Sand dune communities are highly prone to erosion, and the dune processes are dynamic, meaning that the position of the dunes changes naturally over time. Dune stabilization by human-made structures can be as serious an impact on the natural processes of dune systems as excessive erosion caused by human activities (Jalava 2004). Lake Huron coastal dunes are in themselves a rare and imperiled ecosystem. They are host to globally and provincially rare community types, and a variety of endangered, threatened, rare and endemic species (Jalava 2004), some of which occur at MacGregor Point Provincial Park in the vicinity of the existing Visitor Centre, and not far from proposed expansion Location 1.

IV. REFERENCES

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Tomsett, C. 2004. Personal communications between J. Jalava and C. Tomsett on September 1, 2004, re: proposed locations for Visitor Centre expansion or reconstruction at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Superintendent, MacGregor Point Provincial Park, Port Elgin, Ontario.

Toth, N. 2004. Personal communications between J. Jalava and N. Toth on September 1, 2004, re: proposed locations for Visitor Centre expansion or reconstruction at MacGregor Point Provincial Park. Natural Heritage Specialist, MacGregor Point Provincial Park, Port Elgin, Ontario.

Appendix I: EBR Information Notice

EBR Registry Number: XB05E2803

Type of Notice: Information

Ministry: Natural Resources

Status of Notice: Information

Date Information Notice Posted: 2008/12/17

INFORMATION NOTICE

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This information notice was first published to the Environmental Registry on November 23, 2005 at the Notice of Opportunity to Inspect the Draft Environmental Study Report stage. Comments from the public on the draft report will be received for a period of 61 days ending January 23, 2006. The notice was republished on December 17, 2008 at the Notice of Completion, Opportunity to Inspect the Final Environmental Study Report. Comments on the Final ESR will be accepted until February 11, 2009.

Keywords: Protected Areas, Parks, Environmental Assessment

Proposal Title :

MacGregor Point Provincial Park – Visitor Centre Upgrade

General Reason for Notice:

This notice is for your information. The Environmental Bill of Rights does not require this notice to be placed on the Environmental Registry, however, section 6 of the Act does allow the Environmental Registry to be used to share information about the environment with the public.

Further Specific Explanation:

MNR is voluntarily posting this Information Notice on the Environmental Registry to advise interested parties of the formal public consultation opportunities being carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves. To participate in that consultation process, the public is invited to submit comments to the contact person identified below.

Short Description:

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), Ontario Parks, is proposing to expand and upgrade, or replace the Visitor Centre in MacGregor Point Provincial Park. The proposed Visitor Centre will feature interpretive exhibits and displays, offer educational events related to the natural and cultural resources of the Park, and will provide tourism benefits to the Park and surrounding communities within the Southern Bruce-Grey Tourism Area.

This work is being carried out in accordance with the approved MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan. The proposal has been screened and assigned as a category C project, per the Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves (Class EA), in anticipation of a heightened public interest and a need for additional planning, research and evaluation. As a category C project, this project will proceed through the planning and consultation process described in Section 5.2 of the Class EA, including preparation of the Environmental Study Report (ESR).

The ESR translates the MacGregor Point Provincial Park Master Plan's broad policy concerning the development of a Visitor Centre into specific actions, with the benefit of more detailed analysis. This report was prepared in accordance with Ontario Parks' Policy PM 11.03.01 relating to implementation plans and the Class EA. The ESR describes the process for the selection of a preferred location and alternative, the development of a site plan and an evaluation of environmental effects.

MacGregor Point Provincial Park is a natural environment class park located along the eastern shore of Lake Huron within the County of Bruce, five kilometres south of Port Elgin and 130 kilometres northwest of London.

Purpose of the Notice:

To advise the public of consultation opportunities associated with the environmental study report for the MacGregor Point Provincial Park proposed visitor centre upgrade.

Update:

The Final ESR describes the process for the selection of a preferred location, the development of a site plan and an evaluation of environmental effects. Upon completion of the public consultation process, Ontario Parks may proceed to implement this project within a five year period.

Other Relevant Information:

The Ministry of Natural Resources is collecting your personal information and comments under the authority of Ontario's *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*. Any personal information you provide (address, name, telephone, etc.) will be protected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, however, your comments will become part of the record of consultation and may be shared with the general public. Your personal information may be used by the MNR to send you information about future planning initiatives in the park area. If you have questions about use of your personal information, please contact Tim Marchand, A/Parks Planning Specialist at tel.: 519-873-4618.

Supporting documentation for this proposal is found at the web-links shown at the bottom of this notice for the following:

- The Final ESR for the Proposed Visitor Centre Upgrade – MacGregor Point Provincial Park http://www.ontarioparks.com/english/macg_planning.html

- The Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves http://ontarioparks.com/english/plan_ea.html

Other Public Consultation:

Public consultation is planned to occur at three stages during the preparation, review and approval of this report. Direct notice will be given to certain individuals and organizations at each stage of the planning process; individuals and organizations may request to be added to this list, which is updated at each stage. Public notice is given through advertisements in local newspapers.

The following is a summary of public consultation opportunities:

Stage One – Initial Public Notice: October - November 2005

Stage Two – Notice of Opportunity to Inspect the Draft ESR: November 2005 - January 2006 at the MacGregor Point Provincial Park office

Stage Three – Opportunity to Inspect the Final ESR: December 2008 – February 2009 at the MacGregor Point Provincial Park office

Contact Person:

Norah Toth, Natural Heritage Education Specialist
MacGregor Point Provincial Park

R. R. 1

Port Elgin, Ontario, N0H 2C5

PHONE: (519) 389-6231 FAX: (519) 389-9057

The following offices have additional information:

Ontario Parks, Southwest Zone
4th Floor, 659 Exeter Road
London, Ontario, N6E 1L3
PHONE: (519) 873-4615 FAX: (519) 873-4645

Appendix J: Public Response to Opportunity to Inspect Draft Environmental Study Report

Date	Agency/Individual	Comments	Comments addressed in the final ESR		
			Yes	No	Reason
17-Oct-05	Individual	A Natural and Cultural Visitor Centre would be an asset to the County of Bruce		X	This is addressed as a sub-theme in the Interpretive Planning document for the Visitor Centre
		Extend to include The Bruce		X	As above.
		Why limit to Ontario Parks – include things that would help private sector when using Tax Dollars		X	As above.
06-Jan-06	Friends Members	The Ash Pond site where the existing Visitor Centre is situated offers visitors a view of the lake and easy access to it.	X		The Ash Pond site is identified as the preferred location.
31-Oct-06	Friends Member	Some thought should be given to a Wendy Grava memorial.		X	This will be addressed during the Interpretive planning process.
12-Dec-05	Friends Member	General agreement with the contents and support choice of Ash Pond site as being preferable.	X		The Ash Pond site is identified as the preferred location
		Re: 2.2.1 Woodland Site is referred to as being east of the existing location. The Turtle Pond site is east, this one is south.	X		The Woodland Site is south of the existing site and is wrongly located in the report.
		What does the first bullet on page 15 refer to? Seems to be out of place.	X		This belongs with the map on page 14 which has been taken from the MacGregor point Provincial Park Management Plan.
		Re: 3.2.3 Do we still want to refer to the program as "Words in the Wild"?		X	It has been adjusted to read Wild for the Arts.
		Both the Friends and the NHE program would have to deal with what happens during construction at the Ash Pond site. Are operations suspended? Alternate location? What do Friends do about the store their main source of income? A candidate for a Strategic Plan for the short term.	X		A strategic plan for continuing both Friends and Visitor Centre operations will need to be developed.
14-Nov-05	Friends Member	Store with a door so that it can be locked up.		X	This will be taken into consideration during the facility design process.
		Amphitheatre style room with seating for 75. (Projection screen, mike system, podium, lots of plugs,		X	As above.
		Kids corner with hands on displays.		X	This will be addressed during the Interpretive Planning process.
		Large kitchen for use by staff, caterers, Friends. Needs to be fully equipped.		X	This will be taken into consideration during the facility design process.
		Large open area with educational displays.		X	This will be addressed during the Interpretive Planning process.

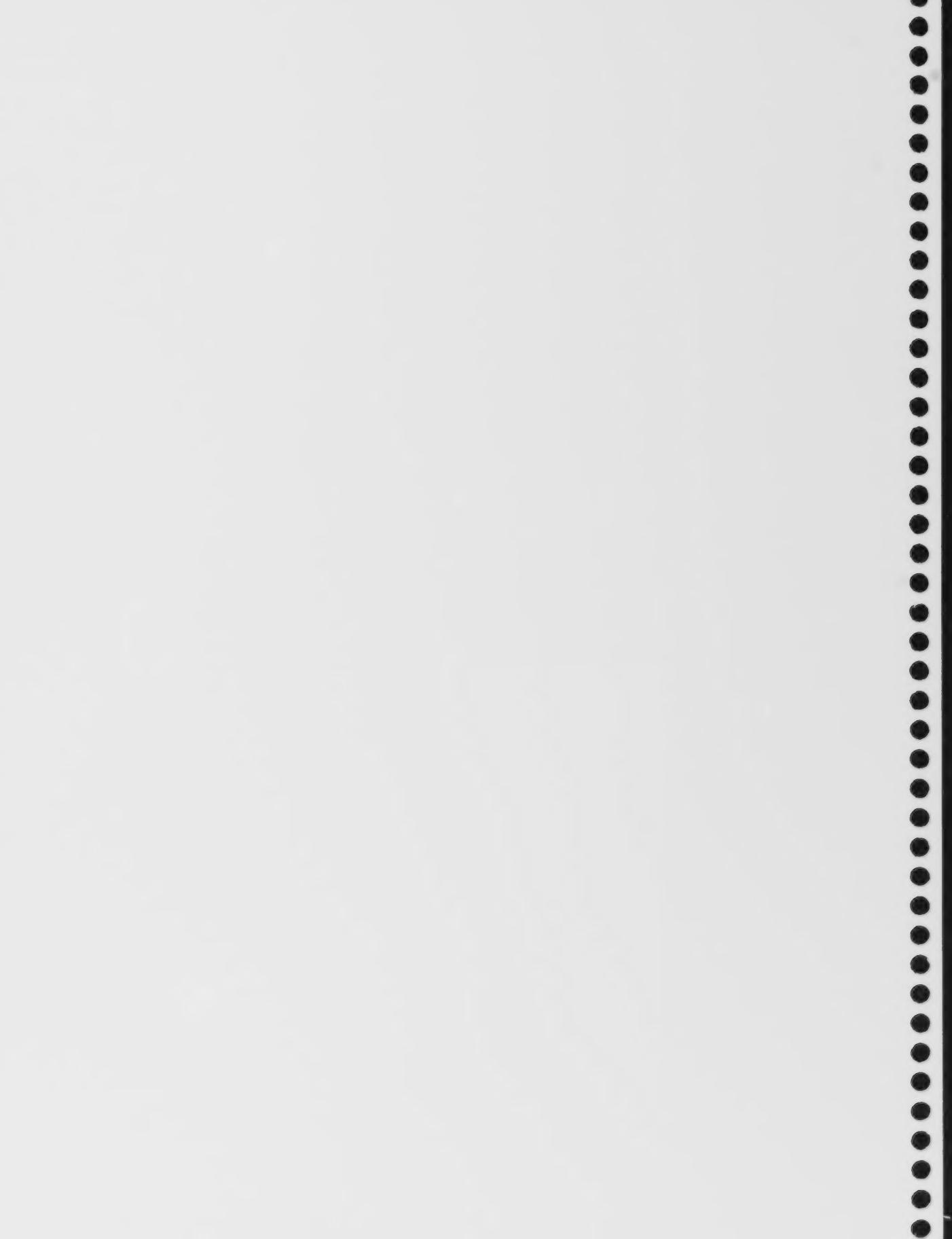
		Washrooms available from outside.	X	Outside access will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Larger washroom available from inside.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Foyer for hanging coats, reception area.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Friend's storage room.	X	This will be further addressed during the facility design process.
		Storage for barbeques.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Patio with roof for outdoor talks, perhaps with screened or sliding glass doors.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Office for staff.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Upstairs viewing room and deck.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Big windows overlooking the water.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process and would be a possible component in an energy efficient building.
		Deck close to parking lot – very welcoming.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Bi-fold doors to break large room into smaller rooms.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Display board on outside of building.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design/Interpretive Planning process.
		Information desk	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Wheel chair accessible.	X	Barrier free access is recognized as a necessary component for this facility.
20-Oct-05	Friends Member	Expanded gift shop to help with financial support.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Fond memories of programs and exhibits but upgraded Visitor Centre would help educate more people to the natural and cultural resources of the Park and surrounding area.	X	This will be addressed during the Interpretive Planning process.
10-Nov-05	Individual	Permanent theatre for 75 – 100, new staff rooms, more space for displays and to expand Friends of MacGregor space.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design and Interpretive planning process.
14-Nov-05	Friends Member	Enough space for 4-6 park staff and 2-3 Friends staff	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Separate kitchen facilities – for use for catering.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Conference room for meetings.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Amphitheatre for presentations with audio-visual needs.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Separate room for library and filing, Printer/scanner/copier.	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.
		Two meeting rooms (or one that can be divided into two).	X	This will be addressed during the facility design process.

		Separate store facilities for Friends. Lockable door, all glass.	X		This will be further addressed during the facility design process.
		Storage space for Friends.	X		This will be further addressed during the facility design process.
		Interpretive viewing area with interactive and static displays. Storage for displays when not in use.	X	X	This will be addressed during the Interpretive planning process.
		Wheel chair accessible.	X		Barrier free access is recognized as a necessary component for this facility.
		Separate children's area with interactive displays.		X	This will be further addressed during the facility design/ interpretive planning process
		Washrooms (including wheel chair accessible) accessible from both inside and outside.	X		Barrier free access is recognized as a necessary component for this facility. Outside access will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Patio access available both front and back. Seating for viewing the lake. Picnic tables. Wheel chair accessible.		X	Barrier free access is recognized as a necessary component for this facility. This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Sell coffee and ice cream as well as pop.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process and within a business plan for the facility.
		Second floor viewing area with outside access.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Easy access to Huron Fringe Trail.	X		This will be further addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Better parking area, paved, and staff parking area.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Outdoor area for children's programs.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design / Interpretive planning process.
		Outdoor amphitheatre and campfire circle.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Subdued lighting for night viewing.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
18-Nov-05	Friends Member	Office for park employee's summer staff.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		All areas can be heated/cooled separately		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Friends store area off main rotunda or lobby.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Public washrooms	X		Barrier free public washrooms are recognized as a necessary component for this facility.
		Food purchasing section – packaged foods		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Food preparation area – for use by park, Friends and outside groups.		X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Teaching/meeting room of 30 – 40		X	This will be addressed as part

		people. Could be used as games room for campers.		of the facility design process.
		Interpretive areas in main rotunda for visitors.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Outside picnic area – on porch or on ground.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		A tour of similar facilities should be made to look at sizing, efficient, creative and functional ideas.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design / interpretive planning process.
		Each user group should be questioned for all elements needed in their work area.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
10-Nov-06	Friends Member	Public and staff washroom facilities	X	Barrier free public washrooms are recognized as a necessary component for this facility.
		A combined reception, display and congregating area.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		A separate theatre/assembly hall with portable seating/tables.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Separate retail areas for Ontario Parks and Friends	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Classroom facilities for educational groups/special meetings	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Separate office areas for full-time/seasonal staff	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Storage facilities	X	This will be further addressed as part of the facility design process.
		An area for Friends support – store, office, storage	X	This will be further addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Kitchen for food prep and possible concession	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Full season occupancy for all or part of the facility	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Additional facilities as required to enhance staff and visitor requirements.	X	This will be addressed as part of the facility design process.
		Trail access should be from a trail head at the Visitor Centre and not in the parking lot	X	The trail head will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.
		Staff vehicles and public access should not share the same walkway	X	This is recognized as a safety issue and will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.
		Parking limits should be strategic post and boulder placement.	X	This is recognized as an aesthetics and environmental concern and will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.
		Bicycle trail looping should be provided to link adjacent trails. Present configuration is confusing.	X	This is recognized as an existing design problem and will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.
		Maintain present amphitheatre.	X	This will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility

				design process.
		Even with indoor washrooms, privy facilities may be required seasonally.	X	This will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.
		Deck/promenade areas should link the discovery area of the new VC facilities to the outdoors.	X	This will be further addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.
		The woodland site between the present Visitor Centre and the Park Store/Wood Yard would require considerable clearing to provide roadwork, parking lot and a suitable building area. Since it is presently unserviced, the extension of water, sanitary, hydro and bell utilities would require additional cost. This area was relatively undisturbed until recently crossed by a bike trail. Further disruption of this heavily wooded seasonally wet area does not seem warranted from an environmental perspective. In terms of visual appeal, it would also fall short due to the lack of a water feature to enhance the aesthetics. Demolition and restoration of the present Visitor Centre location would be required if this site was selected.	X	The Woodland Site is not identified as the preferred scenario for development of a Visitor Centre.
		Services, parking and access are relatively accessible at the Turtle Pond location however additional clearing would be required within an area that has a high population of Red Pine. This species is generally restricted to the back dunes along the Huron shoreline and through personal unsupported observation many have died or appear to be under stress as a result of many years of consecutively dry summers. The population in this area seems to be relatively healthy perhaps because of a locally higher water table. Disturbance would not seem appropriate. Turtle Pond would provide a water feature to the landscape but the natural cycle of fluctuating water levels leaves the area dry and visually unappealing for much of the prime visitation period. Demolition and restoration of the present Visitor Centre location would be required if this site was selected.	X	The Turtle Pond site is not identified as the preferred scenario for development of a Visitor Centre.
		Based on review of the alternate locations, re-use of the site would therefore seem to be most appropriate. The site and immediate area are presently disturbed from past activities and would therefore result in little additional environmental disruption. All services are in place and easily accessible. A phased construction schedule could allow the present facility to remain in operation while adjacent work takes place. This would be followed by a move to the new facilities while the old are replaced or renovated. The result	X	The Ash Pond site (Alternative Location 1) is identified as the preferred scenario for development of a Visitor Centre. How it complements the aesthetics of the Lake Huron shoreline will be addressed as part of the landscape / facility design process.

		would be less service disruption to park visitors and possibly a better match to available funding opportunities. The Lake Huron shoreline, largely underutilized from an aesthetic perspective with the present facility, could become the focal point of the new Visitor Centre and serve as the starting point for public education related to the geomorphology of the area and the parks unique wetland and glacial lake shoreline features.			
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